

Hafa Adai!

43rd Flame Tree Arts Festival returns on April 19-21. **PAGE 2**  
Court sides with Zoning decision on Lexus dealership. **PAGE 3**

\$1

# Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 52

www.saipantribune.com

WEDNESDAY MARCH 13, 2024

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## Ex-Finance chief invokes 5th Amendment



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Former Finance secretary David DLG. Atalig smiles as he leaves the House of Representatives' chamber yesterday after testifying before a special committee that is investigating the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity, and Stability Together grant program. Behind Atalig is his counsel, Bruce Berline.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

**F**ormer Department of Finance secretary David DLG. Atalig appeared yesterday before a House of Representatives special committee, but

at the advice of his lawyer, invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination in responding to most of the questions relating to the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity, and Stability Together grant program. **See CHIEF on Page 4**



## Former Paseo de Marianas is now open to vehicular traffic

The Garapan Revitalization Project reached a major milestone, as significant construction development allowed for the opening of the former Paseo de Marianas pedestrian mall to vehicular traffic after 20 years of pedestrian-only traffic. **See FORMER on Page 4**

OPD

The CNMI Office of Planning and Development advises drivers and pedestrians to exercise proper caution when passing through Paseo de Marianas, particularly at all intersections.

## Kilili: CMA exhausted \$65M allotment by end of FY '23; incurred \$30M shortfall

» Delegate urges DHSS Secretary Becerra to help pay outstanding \$8.6M for services provided by CHCC

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

By the end of fiscal year 2023 last Sept. 30, 2023, the Commonwealth Medicaid

Agency had already exhausted its \$65-million allotment and incurred a shortfall of \$30 million, according to Delegate **See CMA on Page 4**

## Trial date set for parole chief accused of theft by deception



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Chief parole officer Nick Reyes, center, leaves the Superior Court following a trial setting hearing before Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has set a jury trial date for chief parole officer Nick Masga

Reyes, who is accused of theft by deception and misconduct in public office, among other charges.

During a hearing yesterday, **See TRIAL on Page 4**

## INSIDE



### LOCAL

The Department of the Interior yesterday celebrated the finalization of amendments to the Compacts of Free Association, which would provide 20 years of new economic assistance.

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### BUSINESS

Guam Regional Medical City is conducting its annual, hospital-wide Patient Safety Awareness Week training for employees from Tuesday, March 12, through Thursday, March 14.

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### LIFE & STYLE

Kate, Princess of Wales, apologized Monday for "confusion" caused by her altering of a family photo released by the palace.

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# Local

## 43rd Flame Tree Arts Festival returns on April 19-21

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**  
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CORRESPONDENT

The 43rd edition of one of the biggest events in the Marianas that celebrates the arts and culture of the CNMI, the annual Flame Tree Arts Festival, is set to return on April 19-21, 2024 at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai.

Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture act-

ing director Sepe Gloriana Teuira said the CCAC is excited to invite community to the 43rd Flame Tree Arts Festival where they can spend the day with artists, enjoy shows by a variety of performing artists, and satisfy one's cravings by visiting several food vendors.

As one of the islands' trademark events, the festival will highlight CNMI art-

ists, whether it be through food or art pieces and works by local artists. This year, Teuira said, 35 artist booths and 15 food vendors have already signed up to be featured at the festival.

Teuira also said that a delegation that will be representing the CNMI in Hawaii this June at the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, more popularly known as

FestPac, will also be performing at the Flame Tree Arts Festival.

"It is always a big event because it is the only event in the CNMI that calls all artists in all mediums to gather for the weekend to display and demonstrate their art forms, be it traditional, folk, or contemporary. In this event, one will get to meet the artists, get to



Teuira

know them, and learn about their art works," said Teuira.

The theme of this year's arts festival is "Healing, Bridging, and Thriving."

In explaining the festival's theme, Teuira said: "Healing from our sufferings from the storms, the pandemic, and all the other challenges that we face in our daily lives. Bridging the gap between our diverse cultures, and co-existing harmoniously as one on this beautiful tiny rock island of ours. And thriving to be prosperous through our creativity in practicing our art forms and traditions."

Teuira said that, as the annual Flame Tree Arts Festival nears its 50-year mark, it is important to continue to celebrate the event in order to educate the community, visitors, and the youth of the importance of keeping the arts and traditions alive.

"Understanding the changes that we are going through, and with modern technology, it is vital that we also keep up our practices of traditions because this is our identity and the definition of who we are as people of the Marianas," she said.

She also wants to acknowledge community members and sponsors who have supported the event throughout the years.

"Thank you to our community for coming out each and every year to support our annual festival," said Teuira.

"I acknowledge our partners both in government and private sectors for their consideration in supporting our event financially. Thank you to our artists and volunteers who take the time away from their family and busy schedules to take part in this free event, and thank you to our off-island artists for leaving their family and island behind to join us in making this event a success. We appreciate you all," she said.

CCAC is excited to showcase the wide range of artistic talents in the CNMI, and is inviting the community to not only mark their calendars, but join the celebration of Marianas artists this April.

The event is set to start Friday, April 19, at 5pm and conclude at 11pm. On Saturday and Sunday, April 20-21, the event will last from 3pm until 11pm.



### What's Happening to the Affordable Connectivity Program?

The FCC has officially announced that the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) will end in April 2024.

<https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/>

#### ◆ What does this mean for enrolled ACP households?

Households that are receiving the \$30 monthly internet discount before will continue to receive their ACP benefit until funds run out in April. This means that rates will revert to the standard rate starting May 2024.

#### ◆ What are my options as a current ACP subscriber?

To continue receiving services or to make changes, you must complete the required Opt-in or Opt-out form at [ite.net](http://ite.net)

We understand that the discontinuation of the ACP discount may affect your ability to continue your mobile or home internet services at IT&E. Options are available to ensure that you can continue to access plans and services that meet your unique situation.



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# Court sides with Zoning decision on Lexus dealership

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has upheld the Zoning board’s decision to grant Atkins Kroll Saipan two conditional use permits for the construction of its Toyota/Lexus dealership in Puerto Rico, thereby denying Anaks Ocean View Hill Homeowners Association’s petition for judicial review.

Superior Court Judge *pro tem* David Wisemen affirmed Monday the Zoning board’s decision to grant AK two conditional use permits and denied the relief the Anaks homeowners’ association had sought in its petition for judicial review.

Wiseman stated in his order that Anaks’ concern that the Zoning board failed to explain its findings in writing is mis-

guided and does not warrant the setting aside of the conditional use permits

“First, Anaks was not entitled to formal findings of fact and conclusions of law because it was not entitled to a plenary contested case hearing. Second, the conditional use permits do, in fact, incorporate the Zoning administrator’s memo, which contains findings on every factor in Saipan Zoning Law § 702. Third, even if Conditional Use Permit No. 2020-10382 and Zoning Board Order No. 2022-1-03 are somehow deficient, the error is harmless.

“In sum, the court, having reviewed the full certified record, is satisfied that the Zoning board’s decision to grant AK’s conditional use application was supported by substantial evidence—that is,

the decision was a reasonable exercise of discretion and was adequately supported by evidence in the record.

Wiseman also determined that the Zoning board did not act arbitrarily or capriciously but acted within a zone of reasonableness after considering all of the relevant compatibility issues.

Wiseman’s decision in the case arose from a Supreme Court decision last year that ruled in favor of Anaks in its appeal to vacate a Superior Court decision to dismiss its petition against the Zoning permits issued to Atkins Kroll. Anaks’ case was reverted back to the Superior Court for review of the Zoning board’s decision. In addition, Anaks had also asked the court to set aside the Zoning board’s decision and sought injunctive relief.

As an additional basis for setting aside the conditional use permits, Anaks had argued that the Zoning board acted beyond its authority when it hired a Zoning administrator who allegedly lacks the necessary professional credentials.

However, Wiseman states in his order that the Zoning administrator’s qualifications are an insufficient basis to set aside the conditional use permits, where the decision to approve AK’s application rested squarely within the Zoning board’s authority and was supported by substantial evidence.

Anaks had also asked the court to set aside AK’s conditional use permits because “the Zoning board’s decision to approve the conditional use permit without fully evaluating the project’s impacts...

is contrary to a constitutional right—the right to a clean and healthful environment.”

Anaks argued that the Zoning board’s failure to do this will cause Anaks to suffer “harmful and unnecessary noise pollution.”

However, the court found that although the residents of Anaks do have a constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment, nothing in the record suggests that the Zoning board’s decision ran roughshod over this right or subjected Anaks to “significant environmental injuries” that are “probable to occur.”

Atkins Kroll first applied for a permit with the Zoning board last Jan. 4, 2022, to build its dealership and vehicle repair facility next to the Anaks Condominium complex in Puerto Rico.

On March 18, 2022, the Zoning board approved the permit and issued it on April 13, 2022.

Anaks filed a petition to challenge the permit in the Superior Court, but the Superior Court dismissed the petition because it found that it was untimely filed. Last year, the high court found that the petition was timely filed and reverted the petition back to the Superior Court for review.

# Man allegedly threatens brother with pickaxe over tattoo machine

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

A man was arrested over the weekend for allegedly threatening his brother with a pickaxe over an argument they had over a tattoo machine.

Peter John Aldan Blas, 33, is facing charges of assault, assault and battery, assault with a dangerous weapon, criminal mischief, disturbing the peace, and domestic violence.

During a bail hearing last Monday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed a \$15,000 cash bail on Blas before remanding him back to Department of Corrections custody. He

ordered Blas to return to court on March 20 for a preliminary hearing. Blas will be arraigned on April 1.

According to court documents, police responded last March 7 at around 8:06am to a call about a disturbance in Kagman. Responding officers met with the caller who said he got into a fight with his brother, Blas.

The caller stated that Blas had wanted to borrow a tattoo machine. The victim told Blas he could borrow it, but must return it or he would call the police. Blas allegedly responded he could take the tattoo machine and, if anything goes missing, then it goes missing.

Blas’ brother said he asked for the tattoo machine back or he would call the police but Blas allegedly got mad. The victim said Blas grabbed him, put him in a head lock, and punched him more than three times on the right side of his body up to his chest.

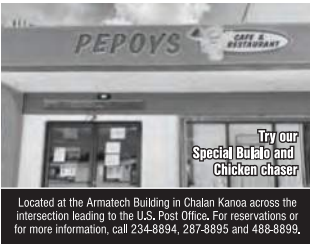
The victim said he was able to punch Blas on the head several times and managed to push Blas out of the house. This was when he allegedly saw Blas pick up an axe in the garage so he closed the main door of the house.

Blas allegedly threw the pickaxe at the door, hitting it and punching a hole through. The victim said the axe al-

most hit his face as he was still behind the door and trying to lock it.

The brothers’ mother, in an interview with police, alleges that Blas was high on drugs and tried to talk to her on the day of the incident.

She claims that when she talked to Blas, he allegedly threatened to kill everyone in the home.



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Attorneys for Co-Petitioners Arlene DLG, Carbullido and Nicole D. DeLeon Guerrero

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF ) CIVIL ACTION  
PILAR M. DELEON GUERRERO ) NO. 24-0042-CV  
(dob: 08/14/1946), )  
Deceased, ) NOTICE OF PETITION TO  
APPOINT EXECUTRIX  
) AND FOR LETTERS  
) TESTAMENTARY

TO: ALL HEIRS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES, AND CREDITORS OF PILAR M. DELEON GUERRERO, DECEASED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Co-Petitioners Arlene DLG, Carbullido and Nicole D. DeLeon Guerrero, has filed with the Clerk of this Court a Petition for Letters Testamentary in the above-captioned matter. The attorney of record representing is Cong Nie of the Law Firm of Banes Horey Berman & Miller, LLC, P.O. Box 501969, Saipan, MP 96950. The petition is set for hearing at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2024 at the CNMI Superior Court in the Courtroom No. 220. Any person who has any objection to the petition may file his or her objection with the Superior Court at any time before the hearing to present such objection or interest in the above-captioned matter.

Creditors and all persons having claims against the Decedent or of her estate are hereby notified that they must file their claims with the Clerk of Court of the Superior Court within sixty (60) days of the first publication of this Notice, or the claims will be forever barred.

Dated this 13 day of February, 2024.

/s/  
Clerk of Court

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., F-0122  
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC  
POST OFFICE BOX 5222  
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950  
TEL: (707) 234-6547  
FAX: (707) 234-9537  
EMAIL: mwhitespn@yahoo.com  
ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

TRIPLE CROWN LLC, ) CIVIL ACTION  
Plaintiff, ) NO. 23-0371  
-v- )  
TLC ENTERTAINMENT, )  
LLC AND TAKAYUKI )  
NIIZEKI, )  
Defendants. )

**SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO TAKAYUKI NIIZEKI, Defendant:  
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file an answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff’s attorney, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Dated February 22, 2024, by order of the Court.

/s/  
Clerk of Court

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**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**RFP NO.: DPW24-RFP No.: 42400062**

**SUBMISSION DATE: April 09, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

**“Hearing Officer for the Department of Public Works, Saipan”**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

The project package will be available on or after **March 06, 2024** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal** Conference for this project on **April 22, 2024, 9:00 a.m. local time** at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 p.m. local time on April 28, 2024** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/RAY N. YUMUL  
Secretary, DPW**

**/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.  
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services**

**DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**RFP NO.: RFP24-DPS-42400066**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 27, 2024 TIME: 10:30 A.M.**

**“Consultant Services for Enhancement, Maintenance, Upgrades and Technical Support for the Island-Wide Traffic Safety Information Systems”**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-305, 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ ANTHONY MACARANAS  
ACTING COMMISSIONER, DPS**

**/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.  
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS**



# Norita: DOF's year-to-date expenditures for FY23 does not have negative balance

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita said their year-to-date expenditure report as of Sept. 30, 2023, does not have a negative balance.

In her letter Friday to Senate president Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), Norita also pointed out that the overall fiscal year 2023 gross actual collection reports still saw a shortfall of \$313,310.

Thus, she said, Finance maintains its position that the actual collections did not exceed the forecasted revenue estimates for supplemental appropriation.

Last Feb. 27, DeLeon Guerrero disclosed that Finance's report for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2023 that ended Sept. 30, 2023, shows a total of \$49.2 million in negative expenditures across 67 activities.

DeLeon Guerrero requested Norita to provide her the accounting entries or a copy of the general ledger that shows

the financial flow of transactions causing these 67 activities to have negative balances of \$49,256,781.

The Senate president also noted that, according to the fiscal year 2023 annual report of the governor, the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority infused \$4.7 million to the general fund, while federal Medicaid also infused \$3.2 million in reimbursements to the general fund, yet both funds were not identified as additional revenues available for supplemental appropriation by the Legislature.

In her response to DeLeon Guerrero's inquiries, Norita said they have been experiencing certain limitations when producing specialized financial reports such as Quarterly Activity Reports, since transitioning into the new financial management information system, Munis.

Norita said the system in their current state is only capable of generating a Year-to-Date or cumulative expendi-

tures (carry forward balances from previous quarter).

Subsequently, she said, in order to present quarterly reports of the general fund to stakeholders, they include manual (non-system generated) adjustments in the process.

Specific to the presentation of the fourth-quarter report, Norita said, the year-to-date column reflects the total expenditures and obligations as of Sept. 30, 2023.

In recognition of the previously submitted expenditure reports for fiscal year 2023 (first quarter to third quarter), Finance included necessary year-end adjustments in the fourth-quarter activity column(s) in order to be consistent with the system-generated year-to-date figures, Norita said.

Thus, she noted, these adjustments created "negative balances" observed in various departments.

She explained that the negative balances primarily stem from expenditures incurred in prior quarters, which they

reclassified as alternative funding sources identified by the agencies.

The Finance secretary said some of the negative balances result from reimbursements received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for disaster expenditures from both the prior year and the current year.

Norita said they continue to revamp their process to ensure that their reports reflect a consistent presentation of the expenditure report.

Regarding the \$4.7 million that, according to DeLeon Guerrero, was not identified as additional revenue, Norita said the Small Business Credit Initiative 1.0 program identified \$4.7 million in "recycled" SSBCI funds during the close-out of the program, which were returned to the CNMI general fund per U.S. Treasury guidance.

The Finance secretary said that, according to the Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement II, "recycled funds" are considered a gov-

ernment fund revenue from exchange transactions and this type of income should be recognized when earned.

On the \$3.2 million that DeLeon Guerrero said was not identified as additional revenue, Norita said the Medicaid grant close-out provided a reimbursement of approximately \$3.2 million to the CNMI general fund.

She said these funds are presented as miscellaneous revenue in the revenue forecasts, annual budget submissions, and general fund quarterly reports.

The Finance secretary said these miscellaneous revenues are treated as general collections used for appropriated expenditures, such as payroll, employee benefits, and other programs.

## CMA

From page 1

Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP).

In his letter to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra Tuesday last week, Sablan said this shortfall means CMA is unable to pay nearly \$9 million to the Marianas' lone hospital, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

If left unaddressed, he said, the shortfall will gravely threaten access to healthcare services for all patients in the Marianas.

In line with this, Sablan urged DHHS to allow the CMA to use its fiscal year 2024 Medicaid funds in order to pay the outstanding amount of \$8.6 million in services that CHCC provided in fiscal year 2023. CMS has already asked DHHS to be allowed to do this.

The delegate urged Becerra to use the DHSS' resources to find any possible means at Becerra's disposal to address this outstanding Medicaid payment to CHCC.

He noted that Medicaid programs in the U.S. territories are subject to a cap and do not enjoy open-ended funding similar to Medicaid programs in the United States.

Sablan said block grant programs are inherently ill-equipped to respond to emergencies due to their funding structure. While the number of Medicaid enrollees tripled during the COVID-19 public health emergency, the CMA continued to receive a fixed level of funding that did not reflect this increased level of need, he said.

Since October 2023, the CMA and the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Region IX Office have been reviewing potential solutions to this issue, Sablan said.

## CHIEF

From page 1

After Atalig's testimony, Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the House Special Committee on Federal Assistance & Disaster-related Funding, directed Atalig and his lawyer, Bruce Berline, to return to the hearing today, Wednesday, at 2pm, where the committee is expected to find Atalig in contempt for refusing to answer questions—similar to what happened to the three latest witnesses that the committee had grilled.

The committee earlier found Shayne Villanueva, Robert Travilla, and Salina Sapp, in contempt for invoking their Fifth Amendment right and refusing to answer questions. Villanueva of Roil Soil, and Travilla and Sapp of Nonstop Corp. were in charge of marketing the BOOST Program.

Atalig, as Finance secretary during the previous Torres administration, reportedly managed both federal American Rescue Plan Act and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funds. ARPA and CARES funds were used to finance the \$17-million BOOST Program.

Atalig was summoned by the past House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee in December 2022 pertaining to an investigation into the BOOST Program. Atalig, however, never testified as he was either on off-island travel for medical reasons or unable to timely hire a lawyer.

The previous JGO Committee had alleged that Atalig personally handled the BOOST applications of his immediate family members.

Atalig served as Finance secretary from February 2018 to December of 2022 during

the administration of former governor Ralph DLG Torres.

In response to some questions, Atalig stated that, upon the advice of his counsel, he responds to the question by asserting his right to the Fifth Amendment under the U.S. Constitution to remain silent.

Atalig said the U.S. Supreme Court has held that one of the Fifth Amendment's basic functions was to protect the innocent who otherwise might be ensnared by ambiguous circumstances.

Citing precedent, Atalig said it has repeatedly been affirmed that the responses of an innocent may provide the government with incriminating evidence from the speaker's own mouth.

The former Finance secretary said he further responds to the question by asserting his rights under the CNMI Constitution, Article 1 Section 4 C.

Among the many questions

that Atalig refused to answer is: What is ARPA of 2011?; When did the CNMI received the ARPA funding from the federal government?; How much did the CNMI receive in ARPA funding?; Does \$481,876,521 ring a bell to him?; and, From May 2021 to December 2022, in his capacity as secretary of Finance, was he responsible for the ultimate approval of expenditure of ARPA funds?

Atalig was also presented a copy of a letter to Bank of Saipan president John Arroyo that he had allegedly signed. In the letter, Atalig informed Arroyo that Bank of Saipan has been awarded a total of \$11 million from the ARPA and Coronavirus State and Local Recovery Funds to administer the CNMI BOOST Program.

Atalig, however, refused to answer questions related to the letter.

## TRIAL

From page 1

Reyes, through his lawyer, invoked his right to a speedy trial in the theft by deception case filed against him by assistant attorney general James Kingman.

Reyes' co-defendant, Chuilian Fu, also invoked his right to a speedy trial.

Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio set the jury trial for June 3 at 9am and ordered the parties to return to court on May 8 for a pre-trial conference.

Last month, Kingman filed two cases against Reyes in relation to a project to build a patio at the CNMI Parole Office.

In one of the cases, Reyes is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit misconduct in public office, one count of conspiracy to commit theft by deception, and two counts of theft by deception in relation to the authorization of funds for the patio construction.

In this case, Reyes and Fu allegedly agreed last Oct. 4, 2022, to build a patio at the Parole Office that was to be built by a tailoring company owned by Fu, F&S Corp., in the amount of \$9,997.80. In reality though, the patio was allegedly built using unpaid labor performed by parolees under the direction of Reyes.

"...One or both defendants committed at least one overt act in pursuance of the conspiracy, to wit procuring the contract, authorizing payment, performing the construction, issuing invoices, and sending communications regarding the conspiracy. ... Reyes was a public official... and committed the above conduct under color of office," said Kingman.

This offense is punishable by imprisonment of not more than 10 years and a fine of not more than \$50,000.

Kingman stated in the information that Reyes obtained over \$9,000 of CNMI funds by deception by creating or failing to correct the false impression that F&S Corp. would build a patio at the Office of Parole and authorizing the expenditure of \$9,987 to F&S Corp.

"[This is]...punishable by...imprisonment for not more than five years," said the information.

As for the other case filed against Reyes, he was charged with four counts of forgery and one count of misconduct in public office.

It is alleged that Reyes forged and altered on or about Dec. 20, 2023, the term of employment of a person from 30 days to one year. This offense is punishable by imprisonment of not more than five years.

## FORMER

From page 1

This integral arterial road in the heart of the business district will again provide the community and tourists vehicular access to businesses in the Garapan Core. It is OPD's hope that bringing back this road will usher in new opportunities and growth for the economy.

The CNMI Office of Planning and Development advises drivers and pedestrians to exercise proper caution when

passing through the area, particularly at all intersections. Please be aware of construction workers and equipment in the area, crosswalks, stop signs, one-way signs, and the 15-mph speed limit.

The Garapan Revitalization Project team is currently focused on completing the construction of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks in the initial phase. In a couple of months, the project is expected to begin other phases including asphalt coating of existing roadways, electrical installation, and tree and

ground cover planting.


"OPD is fully committed to getting this project completed as quickly as possible, and we thank Garapan's business owners and the community for their continued support and cooperation as construction work continues," said OPD senior civil engineer Mariano Iglecias.

The Garapan Revitalization Project broke ground in November 2022. Through close coordination among OPD, the firms working on the Garapan Revitalization project, and other govern-

ment agencies with development projects in Garapan, construction work for the Garapan Revitalization Project remains on track toward its anticipated completion date of November 2024.

Follow OPD to stay up to date on planning and project updates by following their Facebook @cnmiopd670, Instagram @cnmiopd, "CNMI Office of Planning and Development on LinkedIn," and monitoring their website at <https://www.opd.gov.mp>. For more information, contact [planning@opd.gov.mp](mailto:planning@opd.gov.mp). (PR)





# NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

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## NUTISIAN PUBLIKU (February 27, 2024)

Signun para i Seksiona 5 A. gi “Northern Marianas Housing Corporation” (“NMHC”) i “Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (“CDBG-DR”)” na Prugrāman “Action Plan” (“AP”), para u manafanungu’ i henerāt pupbliku put esti i manmaproponi na “substantial” yan “non-substantial” na amenda siha gi CDBG-DR AP yan para u manā’i i pupbliku tiempu para u fampattisipāo yan i uputunidāt para u famanoppi’ gi esti i manmaproponi na amenda siha. I henerāt pupbliku debi na u ma’intrega hālum i upiñon-ñiha gi halum trenta (30) dihas ginen i fetchan publikasion nu esti na Nutisia put esti i tinilaika ni manmaproponi siha gi CDBG-DR AP.

I “substantial” na amenda siha manaprisisu yanggin guaha tinilaika gi halum i prugrāman benifisiu/“criteria” i kuālifikaō, “addition/deletion” nu i aktibidāt, o sino “reallocation i “substantial amount”. I “substantial” na amenda siempri lokkuu’ prumisisu yanggin kuatkuet na tinilaika siha gi prugrāma umupus i singku miyon pesus (\$5,000,000). I “substantial” na amenda debi na u pribeni rasonāpbli na uputunidāt (maseha 30 dihas) para upiñon pupbliku.

Todu i tinilaika siha debi na u madukumentu ni Prugrāman NMHC’s CDBG-DR para u pribeni todū i dos nisisāriu yan rasonāpbli na “justification”. Todū i “substantial” na amenda siha siempri ingklusu i mantinattiyi:

- I eksakto na aidentifikasion nu mānu na sinahguan manā’yi, mafunas, pat matulaika;
- Klāru na diskripsion nu ginen mānu/para mānu i fundu; yan
- I mās nuebu yan maribisa na “budget” dispues di i “re-allocation” nu i salāppi’.

Gi inātābis, i “non-substantial” na amenda siha para i “Action Plan” ti manmasuhetu para pāttisipasion siudadanu lāo i NMHC madisidī para u ingklusu i “non-substantial” na amenda para i mamensiona na Plānu gi halum esti na Nutisia para infotmasion ha’ na rason siha. Yan mās, todū i “action plan” na amenda siha siempri managuaha gi website i CNMI CDBG-DR gi [www.cnmicdbg-dr.com](http://www.cnmicdbg-dr.com) yan siña machuli’ kopia gi ufisinin i NMHC yan i CDBG-DR siha ni gaigi iya Saipan, Tinian, yan Luta para etyi siha i ti siña ma’akses i “Internet”. I ninatutungu’ i pupbliku mampus impottānti sa’ esti na fundu dinipendi meggai gi pāttisipasion pupbliku yan i tetenan ni ti matakka’ nisisita para u ma’ebalua.

I NMHC siempri ma’usa i mantinattiyi na “avenues/outlets” para u manafanungu’ i pupbliku put i Prugrāman CDBG-DR:

- Nutisia gi halum gaseta
- Anunsiu Rediu • Social media
- CNMI CDBG-DR website

Uttimu, i NMHC siempri ha chuli’ rasonāpbli na manera para u na’siguru na i “very low-, low-,” yan “moderateincome” na petsona siha, kuntuđu i tāotāo ni gai disiblidāt, i gai inamku’ yan i tāotāo ni “Limited English Proficiency (LEP)” na managuaha akses para u mās makumprendi i prugrāma yan parehu na uputunidāt para u fampattisipāo gi halum esti impottānti na aktibidāt i CDBG-DR ni kumunfotma yan i manmakātkātga na “policies” yan “procedures” ni gaigi gi halum i Prugrāman CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan.” I manmamensiona yan kumplidu na “Citizen Participation Plan” siña ma’akses gi website i CNMI CDBG-DR gi: [www.cnmi-cdbg-dr.com](http://www.cnmi-cdbg-dr.com) o sino siña masodda’ gi Subsection 4.E.1. Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of the CDBG-DR Action Plan (pages 72 - 74), ni ma amenda. I kopian i “Action Plan”, komu ma’amenda ginen esti na tinilaika na priñiponi siha, siña ma’akses gi website i CNMI CDBG-DR gi: [www.cnmi-cdbg-dr.com](http://www.cnmi-cdbg-dr.com) o sino siña machuli’ kopia gi maseha mānu na ufisinin i NMHC iya Saipan, Tinian, yan Luta.

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Proposed changes are highlighted in yellow. The corresponding page numbers reflect the actual page numbers of the most current action plan, as amended and posted on NMHC’s CDBG-DR website at: <https://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com/action-plan/action-plan-documents/>.

#### SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT NO. 03 Summary and Modifications

Pursuant to **Subsection 5.D.**<sup>1</sup>, the following proposed modifications shall go into effect after the required 30-day public comment period ends and concurrence from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The proposed modifications, as presented herein, were prompted by the following reason(s):

- After close consultation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”), the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation “NMHC” (hereinafter referred to as the “Grantee” interchangeably) hereby seeks to assist Non-LMI<sup>2</sup> homeowners whose single and principal dwellings or homes were damaged by qualifying storm(s)<sup>3</sup> under the Urgent Need National Objective;
- There are still families, bona fide disaster victims, whose total household income exceed the NMHC-CDBG-DR Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program’s Income Limits schedule and whose homes were destroyed by qualifying storm(s) and remain in disrepair;
- 13 families have thus far been identified as non-LMI household applicants whose applications were previously denied under NMHC’s CDBG-DR Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program due to household incomes exceeding the program’s Income Limits schedule, and whose homes were destroyed by qualifying disaster(s) and remain in disrepair;

<sup>1</sup> A **substantial amendment** is defined as a change in program benefit or eligibility criteria; the addition or deletion of an activity; or the allocation or reallocation of a monetary threshold specified by the grantee in its action plan. The CNMI monetary threshold for a substantial amendment is any changes in Action Plan amounts that exceed \$5 million. Substantial amendments are changes to an Action Plan which require a 30-day public comment period. All amendments will be listed on the CDBG-DR website sequentially.

<sup>2</sup> 80.01% or greater AMI

<sup>3</sup> Presidentially Declared Disasters: 1. Typhoon Mangkhut; and 2. Super Typhoon Yutu

- 80% (\$31,525,626) of NMHC’s CDBG-DR Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program’s total allocation has been set aside to assist an estimated 126 eligible LMI families rehabilitate or reconstruct their storm-damaged homes under the LMI National Objective while the remaining 20% (\$7,881,407) will be used to assist 31 eligible Non-LMIs under the Urgent Need National Objective;

5. **Section 1 of 85 FR 4651** provides that “A Grantee may determine where to use the remaining 20 percent of the allocation, but that portion of the allocation may only be used to address unmet disaster needs in those areas that the grantee determines are ‘most impacted and distressed’ (Municipalities of Saipan and Tinian) and that received a presidential major disaster declaration...” Clearly, unmet disaster needs in these MID areas still exist but NMHC’s program Income Limits schedule, which is not required under this particular program, precludes this class of applicants from qualifying for CDBG-DR financial assistance under NMHC’s CDBG-DR Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction program;

- It has been determined that the current Income Limits schedule for non-LMIs under the Urgent Need National Objective, 80.01% - 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI), needs to be amended in order for NMHC to assist more disaster victims rehabilitate or reconstruct their homes and whose incomes exceed 120% AMI;
- HUD does not object to this proposed Substantial Amendment but strongly recommends that the thirteen (13) non-LMI applicants who previously applied and were subsequently denied assistance due to their incomes exceeding the program’s current Income Limits schedule (80.01% - 120%) under the Urgent Need National Objective and that NMHC has on record to be assisted first;
- This Substantial Amendment is required to authorize NMHC to modify the program’s Income Limits schedule to allow the agency to assist disaster victims, whose total household incomes exceed the program’s Income Limits schedule of 120% AMI, repair their homes. Financial Assistance shall be subject to availability of funds.


Pages 73 - 74

#### g. Target Groups

The program will categorize the target groups by the following income ranges:

TARGET GROUPS	CDBG-DR PROGRAM CNMI-MEDIAN INCOME RANGE	INTEREST RATE	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE
First	0%-30%	0% N/A	Deferred Loan Grant
Second	30.01% -50%	0% N/A	75% Deferred Loan and 25% Non-Interest-Bearing Loan Grant
Third	50.01% - 80%	0% N/A	50% Deferred Loan and 50% Non-Interest-Bearing Loan Grant
Fourth	80.01% - 120% or greater	0% N/A	25% Deferred Loan and 75% Non-Interest-Bearing Loan Grant (The national objective for this group is urgent need)

Written comments are due by March 28, 2024 and may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to [cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhc.gov.net](mailto:cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhc.gov.net).




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## PUBLIC NOTICE (February 27, 2024)

Pursuant to Section 5 A. of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (“NMHC”) Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (“CDBG-DR”) Program’s Action Plan (“AP”), this is to notify the general public about these proposed substantial and non-substantial amendments to the CDBG-DR AP and afford citizen participation and the opportunity to comment on these proposed amendments.

The general public has thirty (30) days from publication date of this Public Notice to submit comments on these proposed changes to the CDBG-DR AP. Substantial amendments are required when there is a change in program benefit/eligibility criteria, addition/deletion of an activity, or reallocation of substantial amounts.

A substantial amendment will also be required if any program changes exceed five million dollars (\$5,000,000). Substantial amendments must provide a reasonable opportunity (at least 30 days) for citizen comment. All changes must be documented by NMHC’s CDBG-DR Program to provide both necessary and reasonable justifications. All substantial amendments will include the following:

- The exact identification of which content is being added, deleted, or changed;
- A clear description of where funds are moved from/to; and
- The updated and revised budget after re-allocation of funding.

Conversely, non-substantial amendments to the Action Plan are not subject to citizen participation but NMHC decided to include a non-substantial amendment to the said Plan in this Public Notice for informational purposes only. Furthermore, all action plan amendments will be available via the CNMI CDBG-DR website at [www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com](http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com) and hardcopies may be obtained at any of the NMHC central and CDBG-DR offices located on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota by those who do not have access to the Internet. Notifying the public is of paramount importance as these funds are largely dependent on public participation and the remaining unmet need to be assessed. NMHC will utilize the following avenues/outlets to notify the public of the CDBG-DR Program:

- Notices in the local newspaper
- Radio announcements
- Social media
- CNMI CDBG-DR website

Last, NMHC will take reasonable steps to ensure very low-, low-, and moderate-income persons, including persons with disabilities, the elderly and persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in this important CDBG-DR activity and in accordance to prescribed policies and procedures embedded in the CDBG-DR Program’s Citizen Participation Plan. The aforesaid and complete Citizen Participation Plan may be accessed at the CNMI CDBG-DR website: [www.cnmi-cdbg-dr.com](http://www.cnmi-cdbg-dr.com) or found at Subsection 4.E.1. Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of the CDBG-DR Action Plan (pages 72 - 74), as amended. A copy of the Action Plan, as amended by these proposed changes, may be accessed at the CNMI CDBG-DR website at: [www.cnmi-cdbg-dr.com](http://www.cnmi-cdbg-dr.com) or obtained at any of the NMHC offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Proposed changes are highlighted in yellow. The corresponding page numbers reflect the actual page numbers of the most current action plan, as amended and posted on NMHC’s CDBG-DR website at: <https://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com/action-plan/action-plan-documents/>.

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<sup>2</sup> 80.01% or greater AMI

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Written comments are due by March 28, 2024 and may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to [cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhc.gov.net](mailto:cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhc.gov.net).



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# Opinion

Hafa Adair

## Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER  
Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 52Published daily at 2/F JP Center,  
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### EDITORIAL

## Biden takes off: A strong start to the long campaign

With a one-two punch, the incumbent president made a strong case for his reelection—especially given that the alternative is a man who seeks to overturn the results of democratic elections, who's champing at the bit to punish his political enemies and who says immigrants are vermin.

The first Joe Biden punch landed Thursday night, when he delivered a forceful State of the Union address pushing back on many of Donald Trump's lies and distortions. In contrast to Trump, whose only policy on the Mideast is that Israel should "finish the problem," Biden wants a ceasefire to get the hostages out of Gaza and get needed humanitarian aid into Gaza. Backing Israel's right to defend itself; he also wants to prevent unnecessary bloodshed.

In contrast to Trump, who demands Republicans reject any reform on the border, Biden again touted a wise bipartisan deal that would've boosted the numbers of asylum officers, immigration judges and drug scanners.

In an attempt to undercut those who say he's too old, Biden smartly linked his 81 years to some of his obvious strengths—being a decent and dignified person—while reminding people that the also-elderly man he's running against traffics in "resentment, revenge and retribution."

Sure, if this were a theater review, we would care a bit more about the fact that Biden flubbed some lines. But he's never been a great big-stage performer. And the ability to stir people to stand and clap is just one small attribute of a leader. It matters far, far less than the ability to surround oneself with good people and consistently exercise good judgment on big, tough questions. Indeed, smooth delivery of soul-stirring rhetoric can just as easily be used in service of pernicious people and bad ideas as good ones.

This brings us to the second punch in Biden's combo. It came Friday morning, in the latest Labor Department report on the single most important indicator of the health of the U.S. economy. Employers produced 275,000 new jobs in February, a very good sign that growth is continuing at a healthy pace and wages are still rising even as inflation edges lower.

That brings to 15 million the number of jobs created under Biden. Contrast that to Trump, the first president since Herbert Hoover to leave the nation with fewer jobs than when he took office. And for those who blame everything that went wrong during those four years on COVID, the facts differ. And even if that were the case, it underscores a Trump failure: His disastrously flat-footed, know-nothing response to the pandemic was one of the core reasons the economy seized up.

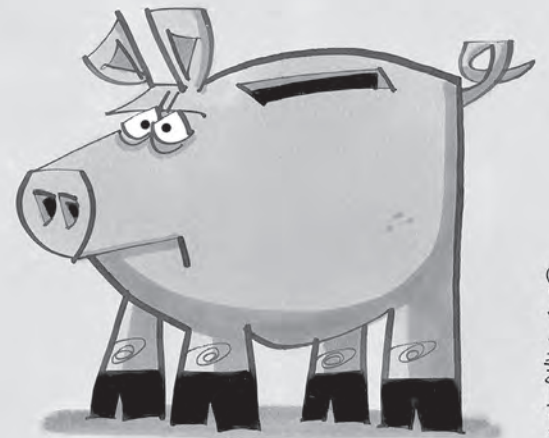
Biden isn't the perfect candidate. The coming months will test him politically. But anyone sane and honest must admit that he's notched a series of major legislative victories: an American Rescue Plan that got the economy off its back, a huge bipartisan infrastructure bill, the first big gun-safety law in decades, a law to invest in microchip production here at home, and the Inflation Reduction Act, which invested billions in clean energy and drove down drug prices.

See BIDEN on Page 7

### HOW DEMOCRATS SEE TRUMP SUPPORTERS...



### HOW TRUMP SEES THEM...

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MAGA

## Give 'em hell, Joe

The Kid was back (but we didn't know it yet). The President of the United States was channeling his inner Scranton Joe (but we hadn't seen it yet).

"Mister Speaker, the President of the United States!"

The introduction by the House sergeant-at-arms was still echoing as a smiling, eyes gleaming Joe Biden began that familiar, slow walk down the center aisle. He took his time, shaking as many Democratic and Republican hands as possible at the start of Thursday night's State of the Union address.

He looked as happy as he used to look in the old days when we first became friends. Yet of course he was painfully aware of the latest news headlines about his Democratic coalition unraveling and his polls being underwater. His White House's three years of silence and no problem-solving innovations at the southern border have led to a devastating decline in Hispanic voter support. A New York Times/Siena College poll last month showed that Biden's lead over Donald Trump among Hispanic voters—it was almost 2 to 1—had vanished. They were now statistically even. Americans felt they were reeling under still-inflated grocery prices. Never mind that economists were praising an economic soft-landing recovery.

Yet, watching Biden working both sides of the aisle, I recognized his long-lost Fun-Time look. I had seen that grin, gleam and energy decades ago, when we got to know each other. He loved the Washington game, especially when I told him what it was like covering Nixon's Watergate White House, and how I got around Nixon's order to freeze me out.

But how far into the speech would Biden get before that energy was spent and the gaffes that he had always committed would become his headline? What I didn't know was that he had a new level of leadership secret weapon.

Scranton Joe had channeled his inner Give 'Em Hell, Harry. It would take him to a new level of political leadership command and control. Harry Truman, who was president when The Kid really was a kid, had confounded polls, pundits and polls with his 1948 comeback election victory by campaigning against a "Do Nothing" Congress. "I didn't give them hell," Truman later explained. "I just told them the truth and they thought it was hell!"

Give 'Em Hell, Joe ended up giving perhaps the best speech of his life—and certainly the best of his presidency. He did it with a little help from his friends—and a helluva lot of help from his enemies. (As we'll soon explain.)

State of the Union addresses are infamously boring because even the most eloquent presidents turn them into blah-blah laundry lists of issues and promises. Members of Congress use them mainly as stand-up/sit-down applause workouts. (Then, as we are now seeing, they do little else the rest of the year.)

But Biden was prepared by a speech and strategy staff that

By MARTIN SCHRAM

Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at [martin.schram@gmail.com](mailto:martin.schram@gmail.com).



has often failed him in the past. And Thursday night, he was prepared to hammer home his issues in short, concise points. And he loved to goad Republicans into shouting taunts at him that he then ad-libbed his compact put-down.

And 13 times he attacked his Republican opponent, Donald Trump. Never by name; always by referring to "my predecessor." The nail-sharp points he hammered hit home to the millions of blue-collar middle Americans who have become proud (no longer ashamed) to call themselves MAGA Trump voters: Women who depend on IVF and want a return of *Roe v. Wade*. Buy American requirements. Obamacare's health care security. Big Pharma's price gouging. Fair-share taxing of millionaires—no tax hikes for families making \$400,000 or less.

Each time, Democrats stood and cheered. Each time most Republican pols sat silently—a few jeered.

Biden blasted "my predecessor" for killing the bipartisan border reform that conservatives said had the toughest-ever enforcement provisions: 1,500 more security agents and officers; 100 more immigration judges for the 2 million case backlog; 4,300 more asylum officers and new policies to resolve cases in six months instead of six years; 100 more drug detection machines to help halt fentanyl smuggling that kills our children.

Republicans hooted and shouted "No." But Oklahoma's ultra-conservative Sen. James Lankford, was caught on camera saying: "It's true." Which must be why so many Republicans thought it was hell.

Why were the Republicans so silent on these applause-line basics? The answer was sitting just above Biden's left shoulder. Speaker Mike Johnson was performing comic pantomime instruction. All it lacked was a shouted: "Live from Washington, it's Thursday Night Live!"

Perhaps you thought you were watching his look-alike, Stephen Colbert, reprising a more subtle Chevy Chase—eyes rolling, head shaking "no." His flock remained seated and mostly silent.

So it was that Americans watching "Thursday Night Live" may well have witnessed the birth of the New Republican Silent Minority.



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## Chill out, my fellow Americans. Your president isn't cognitively impaired

**D**id he trip over his feet? Did he make an indefensible gaffe? No, my fellow Americans, he did not. I admit, the bar was set in a rather bizarre place for President Joe Biden's State of the Union speech on Thursday. He is, after all, the oldest American president. And though he is only four years older than his presumed November opponent, former President Donald Trump, 77, the hysteria about Biden's age has become an abiding feature of the national political debate.

Take a chill pill, people.

Our 81-year-old commander in chief was in fine form. His speech, which lasted a little over an hour, was many things: a serious accounting of the country's status at home and in the world, a blueprint for a second Biden administration and a campaign speech that included repeated verbal jousting with his Republican hecklers.

What it was not: the ramblings of "a sympathetic, well-meaning elderly man with a poor memory," which was how special counsel Robert Hur imagined the president would present himself to a jury if he were to be prosecuted for mishandling classified documents.

You could practically hear the collective sigh of relief from wobbly-kneed Democrats, who have been far too willing to let doubts about Biden's age cloud their support for his reelection.

Some even said the not-so-quiet part out loud.

"No one's gonna talk about cognitively impaired now!" exclaimed New York Democratic Rep. Jerrold Nadler.

"I kinda wish sometimes I was cognitively impaired," Biden joked.

Their post-speech conversation was picked up by C-SPAN microphones, which kept cameras trained on the president and his mob of well-wishers as he made his way across the House floor. Watching it, I felt I was eavesdropping at a very high level.

"Those interruptions!" one member exclaimed to Biden.

"It's a game they play," the president replied. "They did it last time. I said, 'Anyone who wants to cut Social Security, raise your

hand.'" (That moment was a high point of last year's State of the Union and seems to have set a template of sorts for the boisterous back-and-forths we saw Thursday. What a contrast to the moment in 2009 when Republican South Carolina Rep. Joe Wilson shouted, "You lie!" at President Obama. I can still picture then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's expression of anger and disapproval. How quaint that seems now.)

As Biden made his way across the floor, he was lauded by Democrats.

"You fired us all up!"

"That was a sermon!"

"You kicked ass and took names!"

"You brought the Irish fire tonight!"

There were some serious exchanges as well: "I told Bibi," I heard Biden tell Colorado Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet, who had said something about Israel. I strained to hear what came next but, to my frustration, it was inaudible.

In any case, by most assessments, the speech itself was a triumph.

Thirteen times, Biden took on former President Trump—"my predecessor"—without deigning to name him, and he batted down the rude members who jeered and yelled, shutting them up with on-point comebacks.

Biden's words dripped with disdain for Trump as he vowed to stick with Ukraine in its war with Russia. "We will not walk away, we will not bow down," he said, invoking Trump's bizarre deference to Vladimir Putin.

He slammed Republicans for blocking the bipartisan border security bill at the behest of their dear leader, and when they booed him, he departed from his prepared remarks. "Oh you don't like that bill, huh? That conservatives got together and said was a good bill? I'll be damned. ... What are you against?" (His reelection, obvi.)

He took on Jan. 6 denialism: "My predecessor and some of you here seek to bury the truth of January 6th. I will not do that. This is a moment to speak the truth and bury the lies. And here's the simplest

**By ROBIN ABCARIAN**

Los Angeles Times



truth: You can't love your country only when you win."

Biden stole the thunder of uber-obstreperous Georgia Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, who wore a T-shirt emblazoned with the words "Say Her Name," a reference to a Georgia nursing student who was killed by a suspect authorities have said is in the country illegally. "Laken Riley, an innocent young woman who was killed by an illegal," Biden said, using an unfortunate term and mispronouncing her name as "Lincoln," but taking the wind out of MTG's sails nonetheless.

He also directly addressed Riley's parents, who had been invited to attend the speech but declined. "My heart goes out to you having lost children myself," Biden added. "I understand."

Biden looked directly at the Supreme Court justices, six of whom sat in the front row, and declared he would—if voters give him a Democratic majority in Congress—restore the federal right to abortion.

"My God," he said, summing up the fears of those who believe passionately in reproductive rights, "what freedoms would you take away next?"

On a grand scale, this is precisely the question facing Americans as they choose their next president.

Do we want a spiteful man who has vowed to seek revenge and retribution on his enemies and has declared he would be a dictator on Day 1?

Or do we want an empathetic president who promises he will "defend democracy, not diminish it," and that he will "always be a president for all Americans?"

## Social media can be toxic for women. Here's how to change that

**O**n social media, most of us don't think too hard about what we're doing as we "like," scroll and swipe across our screens. But I study how Americans engage with these platforms. In researching my new book, I spoke to women and girls across the country about how social media is affecting their lives. What I learned isn't pretty. Still, we can improve women's lives online—by radically rethinking whom we follow, what we share and what we do when we witness abuse online.

One woman whom I interviewed, who asked to be called Vivian, told me she developed an eating disorder as a teenager after she fell down a rabbit hole on Instagram, consuming toxic "fitspiration" (fitness inspiration) content. Now in her 20s, she works as a personal trainer and has realized that the so-called "Instagram body" (you know it: flat belly, big hips) usually requires surgery. But her clients keep pulling up pictures of influencers and saying they want to look like these people.

Social media isn't just giving women unrealistic standards for themselves. It's also inviting the world to judge women more than ever before. Now when a picture of a woman is posted online—whether she's in the public eye or not—social networks provide a forum for people to weigh in with (often vicious) comments about her appearance and, let's not forget, whether she's authentic or "fake." Cornell professor Brooke Erin Duffy has shown how the so-called "authenticity policing" of people by dissecting their appearances and behavior is a practice typically reserved for women.

Social networks are also having a dramatic effect on how women are treated offline. Dating apps, for example, give the impression that there's always more people to swipe on. When people think they have options, they value their romantic partners less. This can help explain why the women I interviewed kept complaining that the men they matched with treated them terribly.

That's when their matches turned out to be real people. Women told me they were regularly catfished online. This is when a scammer typically makes up a fake identity, establishes an emotional relationship with someone on an app, and then asks the targeted person for something like cash to fly to see them or help them invest their money (before disappearing with it). Cybercriminals see women

who are dating as vulnerable because of the popular stereotypes of women as emotionally needy and desperate for relationships.

On social media, mothers are also particularly targeted with misinformation designed to exploit our vulnerabilities. Savvy predators know that moms of severely autistic kids who find it difficult to leave the house, for example, are often isolated, desperate for help and looking online. That makes them good targets to purchase quack essential-oil "cures" (at premium prices, of course). And women and girls also come up against the mother lode of misogyny and hate online, from rape threats to "jokes" about violently abusing women that have become a common part of youth culture online.

People often ask me why women should use social media at all if it's this harmful. The reason is that these platforms are also places where we can empower ourselves—whether promoting our work, weighing in on issues we care about or nurturing relationships with friends who support us.

But it's not simple. When women use social networks to bolster our careers, we often end up with fewer followers, reposts and resulting opportunities than the men in our fields. Part of the problem is that men are still the ones people turn to for expertise.

It's on all of us to recognize this implicit bias and follow and amplify the posts of more women. Start by following 10 more women. If you're looking for experts on a particular topic, SheSource, a database maintained by the Women's Media Center, offers excellent lists of women who tend to be active on social media. On my own website, I've also posted a list of "feminists to follow" to get you started.

We also have to change what we do when we witness sexism and misogyny online. It's generally not a good idea to fire back at trolls, as engaging with content sends a signal to algorithms that people want to see more of it. But it is a good idea to have offline conversations with people you know when you see them post content that is degrading or dismissive of women. Tell them why they're wrong.

Also, many women don't want their abuse given more attention with things such as defensive comments. But a good way to respond, if you see a woman attacked online, is by posting positive

**By KARA ALAIMO**

Los Angeles Times



*Kara Alaimo is associate professor of communication at Fairleigh Dickinson University, where she created the university's academic programs in social media. She is the author of *Over the Influence: Why Social Media Is Toxic for Women and Girls—and How We Can Take It Back*. @karaalaimo*

things about her such as compliments on something she did in her career on LinkedIn that might be seen by hiring managers, or posts about things she has written or produced on social networks like X and Instagram to help promote her work.

We should also report content we see that violates the community standards of platforms directly to the platforms. While tech companies are notorious for not responding to these reports or telling women that the rape threat they received didn't violate the rules, it's still a way of registering our discontent; and if more of us did this, the companies might pay attention.






Finally, we should rethink what we share on social media. Instead of the latest memes, post about issues that affect your life—and give other women likes and reposts when they do so as well. If we all did this, we could radically change social networks to be places that empower women.

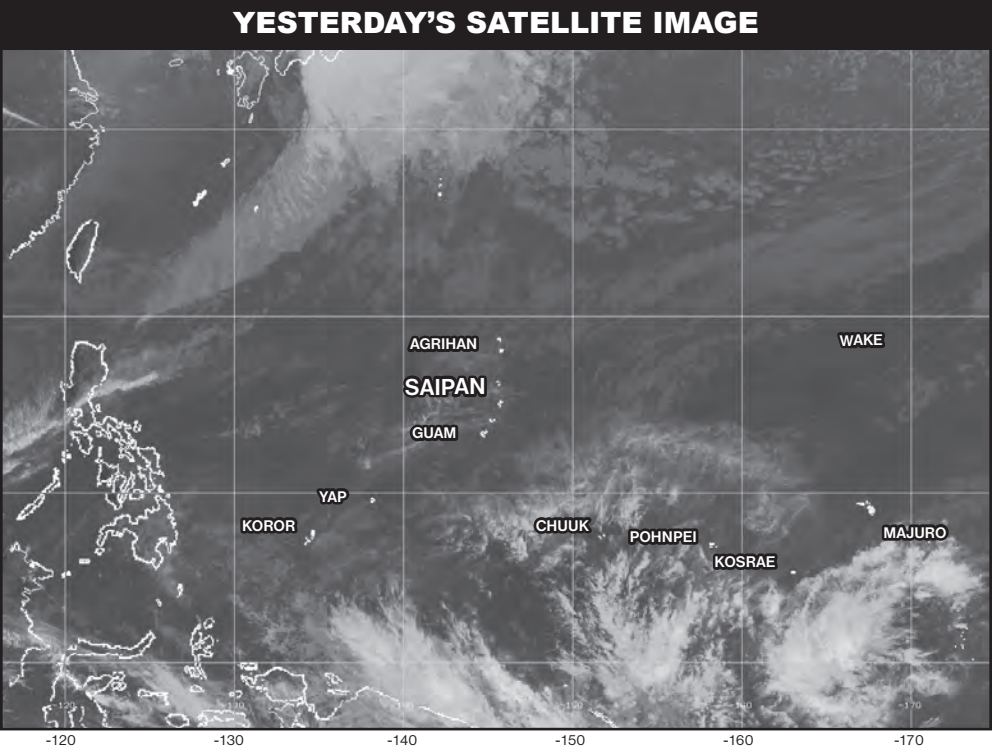
## BIDEN

From page 6

And anyone sane and honest must admit that the dangerous man who's desperate to return to power is a vendetta in search of an agenda.

# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy. isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	
86	74°	86	74°	86	74°	86	74°	86	74°



PICTURE TIME: 7:17 AM TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate trades with fresh gusts prevail in the region. Satellite imagery indicates some passing showers crossing the waters. Tanapag buoy shows seas are 10 to 11 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Fair	86° / 76°	
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 77°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	89° / 82°	
Pohnpei	Cloudy	88° / 80°	
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy/Wind	87° / 80°	
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 82°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:26 AM	6:26 PM
Thursday	6:25 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:23 AM	6:27 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:25 AM	9:21 PM	-
Thursday	9:10 AM	10:22 PM	-
Friday	9:58 AM	11:23 PM	-
Saturday	10:49 AM	-	-
Sunday	-	12:23 AM	11:44 AM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼ °F
Auckland	Light Rain	70° / 64°	
Beijing	Fair	62° / 34°	
Hong Kong	Fair	69° / 57°	
Honolulu	Showers	77° / 68°	
London	Partly Cloudy	54° / 43°	
Los Angeles	Rain	61° / 54°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	93° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	64° / 52°	
Miami	Fair	78° / 66°	
New York	Clear	53° / 36°	
Osaka	Rain	57° / 47°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	54° / 39°	
Busan	Cloudy	54° / 39°	
Rome	Mostly Sunny	66° / 48°	
Salem	Cloudy	74° / 57°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 47°	
Seoul	Cloudy	51° / 36°	
Tokyo	Rain	55° / 45°	
Washington, DC	Clear	56° / 39°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
3:43 AM	Low Tide	0.34	
9:31 AM	High Tide	1.97	
4:16 PM	Low Tide	0.03	
10:27 PM	High Tide	1.83	

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2024

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
				7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

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# DOI applauds renewed economic assistance for Compacts of Free Association

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Department of the Interior yesterday celebrated the finalization of amendments to the Compacts of Free Association, which would provide 20 years of new economic assistance. The \$6.5 billion of assistance is critical for economic stability and quality of life for the people of the freely associated states: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

“Strong ties between the United States and the Pacific Islands form the foundation of our engagement and presence in the Pacific. The provision of 20 years of new economic assistance sends a clear signal of the United States’ commitment to the long, historical relationships we have held with the freely associated states,” said Secretary Deb Haaland. “This critical funding will continue to support the governments of the Federated States

of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau on their path to long-term economic self-sufficiency across key sectors, including the environment, health, education, private sector development, and infrastructure.

The Compact of Free Association packages will provide economic assistance of \$3.3 billion to the FSM, \$2.3 billion to the RMI, and \$889 million to Palau over the span of 20 years through 2043. The funding will provide support for basic public service delivery, such as health and education, improve infrastructure, and bolster the health of the Compact trust funds previously established for each of the FAS. Congress also included \$634 million over the next 20 years to ensure the continued provision of U.S. postal service to the FAS.



Haaland

“With their passage, the U.S. Congress has recognized the importance of our Compacts of Free Association relationships by providing the resources necessary to move toward bringing the economic assistance provisions of the amended agreements with the freely associated states into force,” said assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor. “This law provides critical support to our friends and allies in the Pacific and bolsters both the commitments we have made in the past and relationships we want to keep in the future.”

In its passage, Congress also addressed long-standing challenges for citizens of each of these FAS who choose to reside lawfully in the United States, as provided for under the Compact agreements. The law restores eligibility for key fed-

eral public benefit programs for FAS individuals while they are lawfully present in the United States—an important long-term solution to the financial impacts that some FAS communities may have on U.S. state and territorial governments. Restoring access to federal public benefits

will address gaps in needed social services for families and have a significant impact on the communities where they reside. The law also ensures that the federal government provides, without significant additional administrative costs, a significant portion of

the financial burden currently being borne by state and territorial governments of the FAS. Benefits and compensation from the federal government will be available to FAS individuals in whichever state or territory within the United States that they reside. (PR)

## Biden proposes \$119.1M in FY 2025 budget for US territories, FAS



President Joe Biden speaks to supporters during a visit to a campaign field office, Monday, March 11, 2024, in Manchester, N.H. AP

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Biden-Harris administration released the administration’s budget for fiscal year 2025. The President’s budget includes \$119.1 million in current appropriations for the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs. The proposal would fund initiatives benefiting fellow Americans in the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The FY 2025 budget also supports assistance needed to bring the Compact of Free Association Amendment Act of 2024 into force for the three freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the

Republic of Palau.

“President Biden has proposed a budget that strengthens our territories and complements the authorization of mandatory funding in the FY 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act to secure our Compact of Free Association relationships for decades to come,” said assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor. “OIA’s 2025 budget request will provide for investments in infrastructure, energy resiliency, and security and will promote equity in underserved communities, allowing Interior to fulfill its responsibilities to the U.S. territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean.”

The FY 2025 budget proposal for OIA includes \$119 million in current appropriations and \$2 billion in per-

manent funding.

The budget request for current appropriations contains a total of \$4.0 million in proposed increases from the FY 2024 Annualized Continuing Resolution level, including \$1.0 million to support critical infrastructure needs in the territories, \$1.0 million for compliance with the Insular Areas Act (Public Law 112-149) related to groundwater monitoring of Runit Dome, and \$700,000 to address additional conservation needs for the insular areas.

For more information on the President’s FY 2025 budget, please visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>.

For the Department of the Interior’s FY 2025 Budget in Brief, please visit: <https://www.doi.gov/budget/appropriations/2024> (PR)

## US Coast Guard member safely evacuated in joint operation with Navy’s HSC-25 near Guam



On March 6, 2024, the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy’s Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 (HSC-25) effectively evacuated a U.S. Coast Guard member from the USCGC *Polar Star* (WAGB 10), 100 nautical miles south of Guam, in a joint effort. USCG

By JOSIAH MOSS  
U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia / Sector Guam

**SANTA RITA, Guam—**On March 6, 2024, the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy’s Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 (HSC-25) effectively evacuated a Coast Guard member from the USCGC *Polar Star* (WAGB 10), 100 nautical miles south of Guam, in a joint effort.

“We’re incredibly grateful to HSC-25 for jumping in quickly and skillfully to help evacuate our crew member. Their professionalism and dedication made all the difference in ensuring a successful outcome. This operation truly showcases how our service members look out for each other’s safety and well-being at sea,” said Capt. Keith Ropella, commanding officer of *Polar Star*.

The incident began on March 5, 2024, when the Joint Rescue Sub-Center Guam received a communication from the *Polar Star* crew regarding a 43-year-old man aboard experiencing severe abdominal pain.

Recognizing the need for urgent medical attention beyond the capabilities available on ship, watchstanders directed the cutter to reroute closer to Guam and initiate a medical evacuation.

In a swift response, JRSC Guam assumed mission coordination duties. Working with the cutter command, the medical officer aboard *Polar Star*, and the HSC-25 duty flight surgeon, the watchstanders seamlessly facilitated communications between all involved parties, ensuring a smooth transition of responsibilities and effective mission planning.

On the evening of March 6, an HSC-25 aircrew rendezvoused with the *Polar Star*, successfully hoisted the ill member from the cutter, and airlifted him safely to Guam. The crew transferred him to awaiting personnel at U.S. Naval Hospital Guam in stable condition.

“This operation stands as a testament to the seamless collaboration and unparalleled skill of our U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy per-

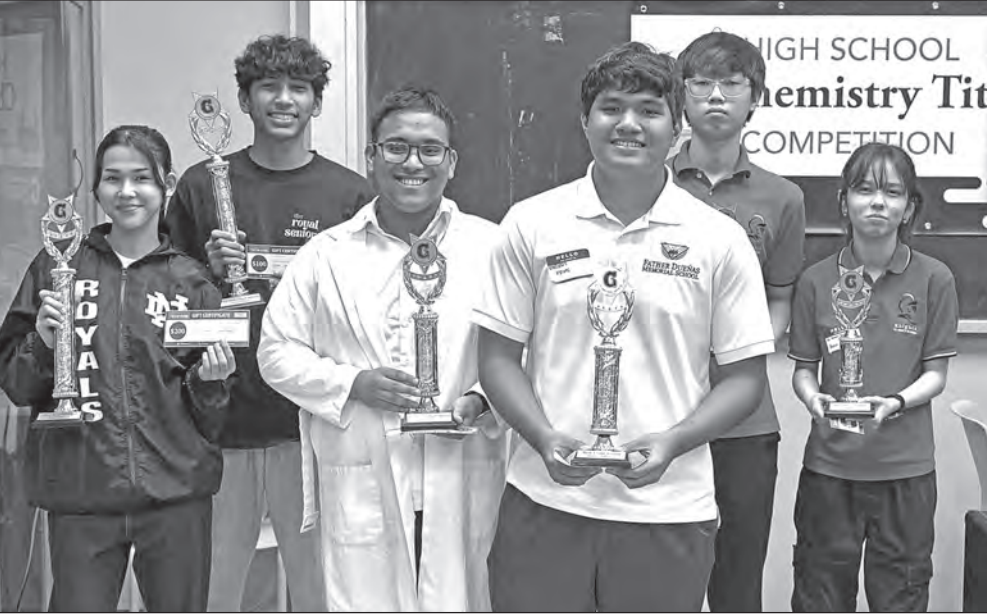
sonnel. The swift and efficient evacuation of our crew members underlines our unwavering commitment to the health and safety of every service member. I am deeply proud of our teams and thankful for HSC-25’s immediate response and expertise, which were critical in ensuring the well-being of our personnel at sea,” said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam.

Homeported in Seattle, the *Polar Star* is the United States’ only heavy icebreaker. The cutter is returning from their annual mission to McMurdo Station, Antarctica, for Operation Deep Freeze, breaking miles of ice up to 21 feet thick to allow for the resupply of the base.

This is HSC-25s fourth medical mission since early February. Over the weekend, they responded to a short-fuse request for a non-maritime medical transfer from Saipan to Guam, facilitating essential medical care for a community member. (USCG)



# Notre Dame, St. John's students take 1st place in UOG Chemistry Titration Competition



"Best Team" award winners of the 2024 Chemistry Titration Competition on March 7 at the University of Guam. From left, Happi-Sleepi Perez and Timothy Gumataotao (Notre Dame High School), first place; Bernard Malicsi and Vincent Sablan (Father Dueñas Memorial School), second place; and Chanju Lee and Kaori Updegrove (St. John's School), third place.

Students from Notre Dame, St. John's, Father Dueñas, and Okkodo high schools took home trophies in the 15th Annual University of Guam Chemistry Titration Competition that was held during UOG's Charter Day celebration last Thursday. This year's competition hosted seven high schools that each entered four students.

Hosted by the chemistry faculty under the UOG College of Natural & Applied Sciences and with chemistry majors serving as judges, the two-part competition tests students' lab skills and precision in determining the concentration of a base and the mass of an acid through titration—or volume measurement.

"We've been practicing for how many months, so to finally be in the competition was amazing—just to go through the bolts of it was very fun. I enjoy titrating," said Bernard Malicsi of Father Dueñas Memorial School, who plans to pursue a degree in biochemistry and eventually become a doctor.

Teammates Chanju Lee



Dr. John F.K. Limtiaco, an assistant chemistry professor at UOG and an alumnus of UOG's Chemistry Program, welcomes 28 high school students to the University of Guam on March 7 for the annual Chemistry Titration Competition.

and Kaori Updegrove from St. John's School said they enjoy the titration process because it involves challenging calculations and is interesting to watch the chemical reaction take place.

The winners of the competition were:

### Best Individual

- 1st place: Timothy Gumataotao (Notre Dame High School)
- 2nd place: Bernard Malicsi (Father Dueñas Memorial School)

mal School)

- 3rd place: Chanju Lee (St. John's School)

### Best Laboratory Skill

- 1st place: Kaori Updegrove (St. John's School)
- 2nd place: Bernard Malicsi (Father Dueñas Memorial School)
- 3rd place: Myka Imbat (Okkodo High School)

### Best Team

- 1st place: Timothy Gumataotao and Hap-



"Best Laboratory Skill" award winners of the 2024 Chemistry Titration Competition on March 7 at the University of Guam. From left, Myka Imbat (Okkodo High School), third place; Bernard Malicsi (Father Dueñas Memorial School), second place; and Kaori Updegrove (St. John's School), first place.

pi-Sleepi Perez (Notre Dame High School)

- 2nd place: Bernard Malicsi and Vincent Sablan (Father Dueñas Memorial School)

- 3rd place: Chanju Lee and Kaori Updegrove (St. John's School)

Also participating in the competition were Harvest Christian Academy, Tiyan High School, and Academy of Our Lady of Guam.

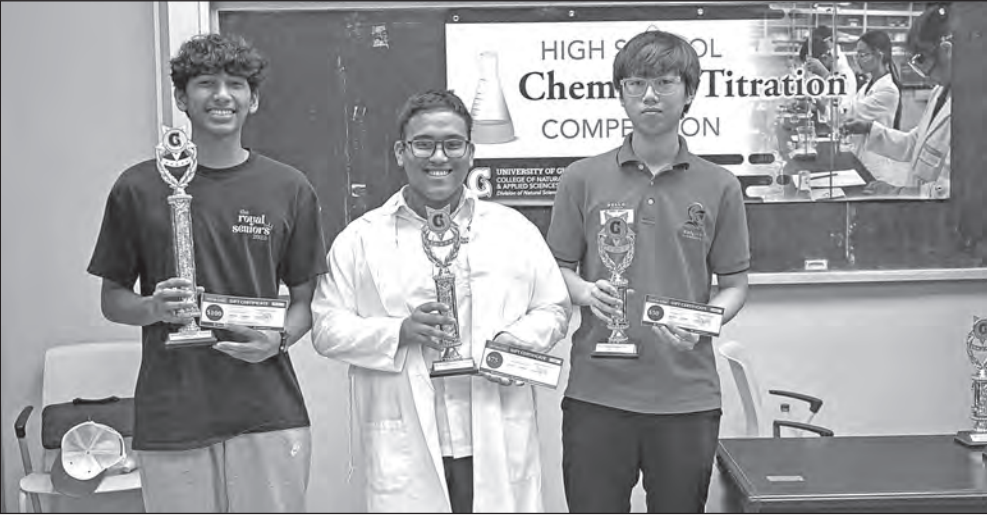
In remarks before the competition, UOG senior vice

president and provost Dr. Sharleen Santos-Bamba shared how UOG chemistry graduates have gone on to become medical doctors, pharmacists, professors, and researchers in Guam and in countries abroad. One example is Allen Marc Soriano, a student from Father Dueñas Memorial School who won the UOG titration competition in 2009, who went on to earn a biology degree from UOG and is now a licensed pharmacist at Guam

Regional Medical City.

The associate dean of the college, Dr. Maika Vuki, encouraged the high school students to consider degree paths in STEM. "Scientists are problem-solvers, and that is what the world needs," he said.

The University of Guam Chemistry Program offers concentrations in chemistry, pre-pharmacy, chemistry-biology, and forensic chemistry—a new track to the program as of January. (PR)



"Best Individual" award winners of the 2024 Chemistry Titration Competition on March 7 at the University of Guam. From left, Timothy Gumataotao (Notre Dame High School), first place; Bernard Malicsi (Father Dueñas Memorial School), second place; and Chanju Lee (St. John's School), third place.



Teammates Segundo Garrido and Isaiah Moreno compete for Tiyan High School at the UOG Chemistry Titration Competition on March 7.



Zoe Leung of Harvest Christian Academy pours sodium hydroxide into a burette during the UOG Chemistry Titration Competition on March 7.



# Business

## GRMC hosting annual Patient Safety Awareness Week training



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Guam Regional Medical City in Dededo, Guam.

**DEDEDO, Guam**—Guam Regional Medical City is conducting its annual, hospital-wide Patient Safety Awareness Week training for employees from Tuesday, March 12, through Thursday, March 14. PSAW is a national, annual recognition week created to promote education on healthcare safety. Each year, GRMC's Quality Management and Patient Safety teams collaborate with clinical and non-clinical departments to provide training on current policies and procedures pertinent to patient safety.

This year, GRMC is expanding its focus to include the Human Experience, encompassing the experiences of patients, employees, and the community. The Human Experience represents the totality of interactions influenced by our organization's culture, which collectively shape patient perception throughout the continuum of care. Additionally, we are emphasizing

Healthcare Equity, which entails ensuring fair and just opportunities for individuals to achieve their optimal level of health.

During PSAW week, specialists from multiple departments will have presentation booths throughout the hospital, allowing employees to fulfill their required trainings. Featured healthcare safety topics will include:

- National Patient Safety Goals
- Fall Prevention
- Suicide Prevention
- Medication Error Prevention
- Pressure Ulcer Prevention
- Hand Hygiene
- Time Out
- Labeling of Specimen
- Ergonomics
- Reporting of Work-related Injuries

GRMC Quality and Patient Safety specialist Michael Khan shared, "GRMC is pro-

actively preventing harm from occurring." He explained that the hospital has been consistent in this annual training since opening in 2015 to foster collaborative growth in the quality of GRMC's patient care. Khan also emphasized the importance of continual training to ensure that GRMC team members are updated with the latest patient safety practices and policies. "This annual training empowers everyone to better equip themselves with the best practices and hospital policies and procedures to safely and efficiently conduct our duties," said Khan.

Trainings will occur throughout GRMC at the Lower Lobby, Main Lobby, fourth and fifth floors, as follows:

- Tuesday, March 12, 9am-12pm
- Wednesday, March 13, 9am-12pm
- Thursday, March 14, 6pm-9pm. (PR)

## Biden's budget proposal for 2nd term offers tax breaks for families, lower health care costs

**MANCHESTER, N.H.** (AP)—President Joe Biden on Monday released a budget proposal aimed at getting voters' attention: It would offer tax breaks for families, lower health care costs, smaller deficits and higher taxes on the wealthy and corporations.

Unlikely to pass the House and Senate to become law, the proposal for fiscal 2025 is an election year blueprint about what the future could hold if Biden and enough of his fellow Democrats win in November. The president and his aides previewed parts of his budget going into last week's State of the Union address, and they provided the fine print on Monday.

If the Biden budget became

law, deficits could be pruned \$3 trillion over a decade. It would raise tax revenues by a total of \$4.9 trillion over that period and use roughly \$1.9 trillion to fund various programs, with the rest going to deficit reduction.

The president traveled Monday to Manchester, New Hampshire, where he called on Congress to apply his \$2,000 cap on drug costs and \$35 insulin to everyone, not just people who have Medicare. He also advocated for making permanent some protections in the Affordable Care Act that are set to expire next year.

"I'm here in New Hampshire to talk about the budget I released today that would, I think, help in a big way," Biden said.

Biden aides said their budget was realistic and detailed while rival measures from Republicans were not financially viable.

"Congressional Republicans don't tell you what they cut, who they harm," White House budget director Shalanda Young said. "The president is transparent."

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., issued a joint statement with other GOP leaders calling the Biden proposal a "glaring reminder of this Administration's insatiable appetite for reckless spending."

"Biden's budget doesn't just miss the mark—it is a roadmap to accelerate America's decline," the House Republican leaders said.

# World

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Israeli strikes kill at least 67 Palestinians in Gaza as Ramadan begins

With no end to the war sight, Palestinians in Gaza began fasting Monday for the holy month of Ramadan as hunger worsens across the strip and pressure is raised on Israel over the growing humanitarian crisis. The United States, Qatar and Egypt had hoped to broker a cease-fire ahead of the normally joyous month of dawn-to-dusk fasting that would include the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, and the entry of much more humanitarian aid. But the cease-fire talks stalled last week. Gaza's Health Ministry said the bodies of 67 people killed by Israeli strikes were brought to hospitals over the past 24 hours, bringing the Palestinian death toll to more than 31,112 since the war began. The ministry doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count, but says that women and children make up two-thirds of the dead. The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 hostage. Hamas is still believed to still be holding around 100 captives and the remains of others. Five months of war have forced around 80% of Gaza's 2.3 million people from their homes and pushed hundreds of thousands to the brink of famine. (AP)

### Al-Qaida's Yemen branch says leader Khalid al-Batarfi dead in unclear circumstances

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates** (AP)—The leader of Yemen's branch of al-Qaida is dead, the militant group announced late Sunday, without giving details. Khalid al-Batarfi had a \$5 million bounty on his head from the U.S. government over leading the group, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, through years that saw him imprisoned, freed in a jailbreak, and governing forces in Yemen amid that country's grinding war. Though believed to be weakened in recent years due to infighting and suspected U.S. drone strikes killing its leaders, the group known by the acronym AQAP has long been considered the most dangerous branch of the extremist group still operating after the killing of founder Osama bin Laden. Al-Qaida released a video showing al-Batarfi wrapped in a white funeral shroud and

al-Qaida's black-and-white flag. Militants offered no details on the cause of his death and there was no clear sign of trauma visible on his face. Al-Batarfi was believed to be in his early 40s. "Allah took his soul while he patiently sought his reward and stood firm, immigrated, garrisoned, and waged jihad for His sake," the militants said in the video, according to the SITE Intelligence Group. The group made the announcement on the eve of Ramadan, the Muslim holy fasting month that Yemen will begin Monday. In the announcement, the group said Saad bin Atef al-Awlaki would take over as its leader. The U.S. has a \$6 million bounty on him, saying al-Awlaki "has publicly called for attacks against the United States and its allies."

### 13 years after Fukushima nuclear disaster, Japan remembers the dead and vows to keep rebuilding

**TOKYO** (AP)—Japan marked the 13th anniversary of the massive earthquake and tsunami that triggered a nuclear meltdown and left large parts of Fukushima prefecture uninhabitable on Monday with a minute of silence and memorial events, where officials pledged continued support for rebuilding. The 9.0 magnitude quake and tsunami that ravaged parts of Japan's northeastern coast on March 11, 2011 killed about 20,000 people and drove thousands from their homes in the prefectures of Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima. At 2:46 p.m.—the time when the earthquake struck—people across Japan stopped to observe a minute of silence. In Tokyo's central Ginza shopping district, people stopped to pray on the sidewalk as a bell rang out, marking the moment. In the town of Minamisanriku in Miyagi prefecture, a team of 10 uniformed police officers sifted through gravel and sand on the beach in an annual search for the remains of people who are still missing. Survivors prayed by the bare girders that used to be the town's disaster prevention center, where dozens died. In the town of Natori, about 400 people prayed and released balloons carrying messages of grief. In Ishinomaki City in Iwate prefecture, residents gathered in a hilltop park where many of them took shelter 13 years ago, mourning as they stood fac-

ing the sea. In Rikuzentakata, about 100 people prayed atop a massive concrete seawall. And at a ceremony in Fukushima prefecture, where some 20,000 people still cannot return to their homes because of radiation, Gov. Masao Uchibori vowed that rebuilding will continue as the decades-long work of cleaning up the nuclear site continues. "We will not give up," he said. "I pledge in front of the quake and tsunami victims that we will accomplish recovery at any cost." A wall of water over 15 meters (50 feet) tall slammed into the coastal Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, destroying its power supply and cooling systems, triggering meltdowns in three of its six reactors, and spewing radiation across the surrounding areas.

### US forces fly in to beef up security at embassy in Haiti and evacuate nonessential personnel

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti** (AP)—The U.S. military said Sunday that it had flown in forces to beef up security at the U.S. Embassy in Haiti and allow nonessential personnel to leave. The aircraft flew to the embassy compound, the U.S. Southern Command said, meaning that the effort involved helicopters. It was careful to point out that "no Haitians were on board the military aircraft." That seemed aimed at quashing any speculation that senior government officials might be leaving as the gang attacks in Haiti worsen. The neighborhood around the embassy in the capital, Port-au-Prince, is largely controlled by gangs. "This airlift of personnel into and out of the Embassy is consistent with our standard practice for Embassy security augmentation worldwide, and no Haitians were on board the military aircraft," according to the Southcom statement. In many cases, nonessential personnel can include the families of diplomats, but the embassy had already ordered departure for nonessential staff and all family members in July. The personnel ferried out of the embassy may have simply been rotating out, to be refreshed by new staff. The statement Sunday said that the United States remains focused on aiding Haitian police and arranging some kind of U.N.-authorized security deployment. But those efforts have been unsuccessful so far.



# Life & Style

## Kate apologizes for altering photo that fueled rumors about health

LONDON (AP)—Kate, Princess of Wales, apologized Monday for "confusion" caused by her altering of a family photo released by the palace—an image of Kate and her children that was intended to calm concern and speculation about the British royal's health, but had the opposite effect.

Several news agencies that initially published the photo, including The Associated Press, withdrew the image over concerns about digital manipulation. Issued by the couple's Kensington Palace office on Sunday to mark Mother's Day in Britain, it was the first official photo of 42-year-old Kate since she had abdominal surgery nearly two months ago.

The retractions sent the online rumor mill, already rampant with speculation over Kate's operation and recuperation, into overdrive. The PR disaster is more evidence that the royal family's long-held mantra—"never complain, never explain"—is impossible in a social media-saturated era.

In a post on social media, Kate said that "like many amateur photographers, I do occasionally experiment with editing."

"I wanted to express my apologies for any confusion the family photograph we shared yesterday caused," the post said.



A montage of British newspapers that lead with the image of Kate, Princess of Wales and her children is laid out in London, Monday, March 11, 2024.

In the past, the palace has issued several of Kate's family snapshots featuring her and heir to the throne, Prince William, with their children Prince George, 10, Princess Charlotte, 8, and Prince Louis, 5.

The latest photo was taken

by William, Kensington Palace said. In an accompanying social media message, Kate said: "Thank you for your kind wishes and continued support over the last two months. Wishing everyone a Happy Mother's Day."

While there was no sug-

gestion the photo was fake, AP retracted it because closer inspection revealed the source had manipulated the image in a way that did not meet AP's photo standards. For instance, it contained an inconsistency in the alignment of Princess Charlotte's left hand with the

sleeve of her sweater.

Other major news agencies, including Getty, Reuters, AFP and the U.K. national agency, PA, also withdrew the photo.

Kensington Palace said it would not release the original unedited photograph. And while Kate's statement provided a measure of clarification, it looked unlikely to stop the swirl of rumor that has accelerated during her absence from public duties.

Former BBC royal correspondent Peter Hunt said the mishandled photo release "is damaging for the royals."

"They knew there would be intense interest in any pic-

ture they released of Kate," he wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. "Their challenge is that people will now question whether they can be trusted and believed when they next issue a health update."

The royal family is under particular scrutiny because King Charles III has also had to cancel public duties while he undergoes treatment for an unspecified form of cancer. The monarch has canceled all his public engagements, though he has been photographed walking to church and meeting privately with government officials and dignitaries.

Charles' relative openness about his diagnosis was a departure for the generally secretive royal family. But it has been eclipsed in popular interest by curiosity over Kate's condition. In the absence of firm information, conspiracy theories have rushed to fill the vacuum.

The release of the photo followed weeks of gossip on social media about what had happened to Kate since she left a hospital Jan. 29 after a nearly two-week stay following planned surgery. She hadn't been seen publicly since Christmas Day.

Kate underwent surgery Jan. 16 and her condition and the reason for the operation have not been revealed, though Kensington Palace said it was not cancer-related.

Although the palace initially said that it would only provide significant updates and that she would not return to royal duties before Easter—March 31 this year—it followed up with a statement last month saying she was doing well.

## Oscars get audience bump, but...

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Barbenheimer" brought a bump not a boom to Oscars ratings.

An estimated 19.5 million people watched Sunday night's 96th Academy Awards ceremony on ABC. That's the

biggest number drawn by the telecast in four years.

But that upward trend comes from an all-time low during the pandemic, and is up just 4% from last year's estimated audience of 18.7 million, according to numbers

released Monday by ABC.

The Academy experimented with scheduling this year's show an hour earlier, and for the first time in years had many nominations for huge hit movies that viewers had actually seen—"Barbie" and "Oppenheimer."

The viewership peaked in

the final half hour, when the audience saw Ryan Gosling perform "I'm Just Ken" from "Barbie," saw Cillian Murphy win best actor, Christopher Nolan win best director for "Oppenheimer" and Al Pacino give the film the best picture Oscar in an odd presentation.

## Lessons from the past still ring true today

**DEAR ABBY:** Years ago, I sat over lunch, reading your mom's "Definition of Maturity." It was shortly after my dad died, and reading it made me realize how lucky I had been. Those were all lessons I learned at home from my parents.

Perhaps this item is in your booklet. But could you print it in your column again for other readers to see? It's an important reminder of what to strive for.

MARY H. IN IOWA

**DEAR MARY:** I am doing that with pleasure. I agree that Mama's definition of maturity is a timely reminder—and perhaps something that people (of all ages) can learn from today.

### DEFINITION OF MATURITY

Maturity is:

- The ability to stick with a job until it's finished.
- The ability to do a job without being supervised.
- The ability to carry money without spending it.
- And the ability to bear an injustice without wanting to get even.

You were correct when you guessed that her definition of maturity is part of the "Keepers" booklet. Keepers is a collection of articles that readers suggested be put together in booklet form, many of which readers had hung onto until they were

worn and yellowed with age. What resulted was a booklet that contains clever observations and items on diverse subjects, including parenting, children, aging, animals, forgiveness, and more. It can be ordered by sending your name and address plus a check or money order (U.S. funds) for \$8 to Dear Abby Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Both witty and philosophical, the Keepers booklet is an inexpensive, welcome gift for newly married couples, pet lovers or anyone recovering from an illness and filled with down-to-earth nuggets of wisdom.

■■■

**DEAR ABBY:** In the past, my husband of 22 years traveled often for work. He had an emotional affair with a co-worker he met on one of those trips. He never saw her again. After that, he became distant and sometimes rude toward me. We went to marriage therapy, which helped.

I was recovering when one day a friend of mine told me my husband had called her and said, "I think about you." She called me immediately afterward. I am very hurt. Now it's hard for me to believe him and trust him. He had a problem in the past with pornography, but he is not doing it anymore, and he has changed jobs. Is there hope for our marriage? Can I trust him again?

HEARTBROKEN IN VIRGINIA

## DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



**DEAR HEARTBROKEN:** There may be hope, if the two of you are able to get to the root of why your husband may be looking for something outside of your marriage. This should be done with the help of a licensed marriage and family counselor. However, you should not trust him again unless you are certain he is **TRULY** penitent.

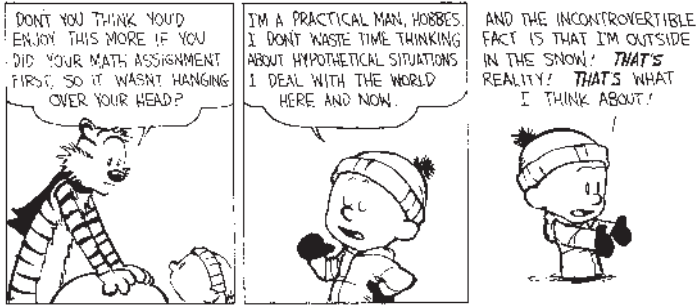
■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



Pastimes

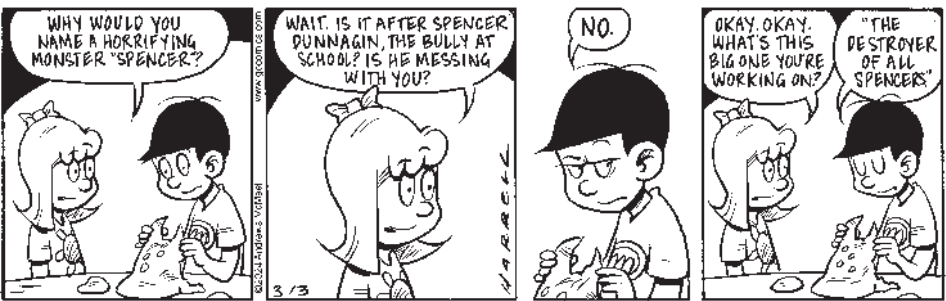
Calvin and Hobbes



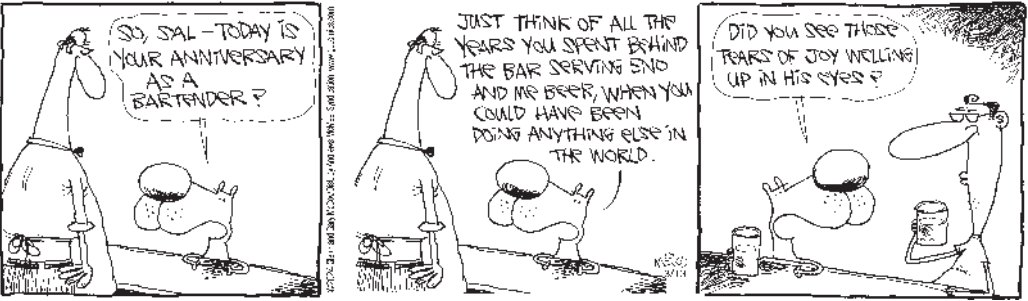
Garfield®



Adam@home



The Duplex



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Level

5 "Gee, ya think?"

8 SFPD alerts

12 Water, in Mexico

13 Before

14 Ban-shee's cry

15 Maine's largest city

17 Villa d'—

18 Steamy

19 Insulted, slangily

21 "—hoo!"

22 At the summit of

23 Suitable

26 SSE's opposite

28 Painter's garb

31 Artist

33 Behold

35 A Great Lake

36 Gawked at

38 Blasting stick

40 Label

41 Writer

43 Officer

45 Sugar trees

47 Ejected

51 Lip balm

52 Ship's window

54 Novelist

55 "—haw!" (oater cry)

56 Church area

57 Poses

58 Many appli-cants

59 Hoe target

DOWN

1 Carton sealer

2 Com-poser

3 Conti-nental

4 Tattered

5 Church officials

6 Coffee vessel

7 Ibsen's

8 "Excel-lent!"

9 Globe-trotter's

10 Small snack

11 Santa's ride

16 Pride member

20 TGIF part

23 Mil. address

24 Farm squealer

25 Travel, sci-fi style

27 Drench

29 Spy org.

30 Beer barrel

32 Bank clerks

34 Concert extras

37 Conk out

39 Talk up

42 Annual athletic awards

44 "Hog-wash!"

45 Apple comput-ers

46 Jai —

48 Hit the bottle

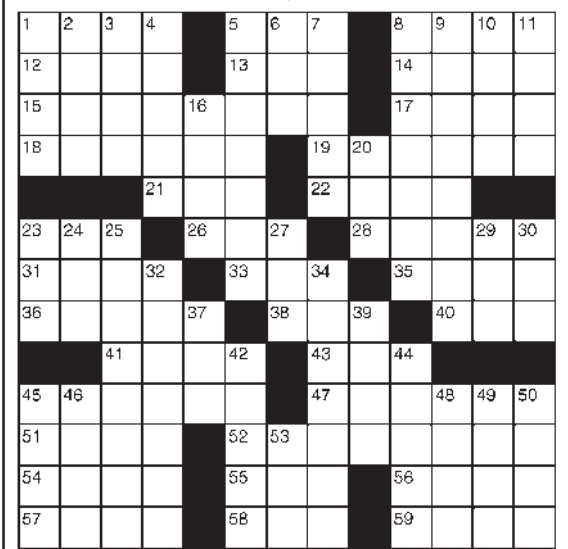
49 Different

50 Home-owner's document

53 Poetic con-traction

Solution time: 23 mins.

Last Friday's Answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Adam Clayton, 64; Dana Delany, 68; William H. Macy, 73; Neil Sedaka, 85.

Happy Birthday: Take good care of your money, possessions and investments this year. Don't feel pressured to act in haste when thought and preparation are in your best interest. Look for alternatives, and you'll discover a unique way to maintain what's important to you without disrupting your lifestyle. Let your intuition lead the way, and you'll make better decisions and receive unexpected opportunities. Personal improvements are favored. Your numbers are 6, 13, 19, 25, 31, 34, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Speak up and own the stage. If you don't like something, distance yourself and get on with what matters to you. Don't let an emotional incident or someone's change of plans alter how you proceed. Put your energy where it makes sense.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Keep your emotions in check and your eye on what you are trying to achieve. Interference will show you someone's true colors. Show compassion, but don't let anyone rain on your parade. Take charge.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Put a plan in place and follow through. Don't let anyone force their way into your territory or lead you astray. Have confidence in yourself and your ability to build a solid foundation.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Determine what you know and do best, and surround yourself with people who can pick up when you falter. When you have doubts, ask an expert, be open to suggestions and don't fear trying

something new. Experience is the best teacher. Live, learn and excel.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't fold under pressure. Think about what you want and use the experience. You must recognize when someone takes advantage of you. Anger is not the solution, but doing what's best for you will help you dodge letting someone sweep you into their wake.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): An open mind will lead to valuable information. A course or networking will point you in a new direction. Evaluate your relationships and consider what everyone brings to the table. Align yourself with a strong team.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A forceful presentation will help convey your point. Trying to avoid controversy or sparing someone's feelings will backfire. Truth will serve you better than being too cowardly to be blunt. You will send the wrong message if you don't stand up for yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Stay calm, recognize what you are up against and use insight and initiative to sort through any difficulty before it has a chance to escalate. How you handle matters will determine who stands by your side. Be a good listener, evaluate and offer worthwhile incentives.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Think situations through and act quickly. Someone will block you or create a scene to throw you off guard. Researching will help you avoid a situation that is confusing and staged to make you look bad. Don't share secrets or personal data.

EUGENIA LAST THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Be spontaneous and do more. Your actions will impact how your day unfolds. Don't let emotions cloud your vision when taking care of business will get you where you want to go. Act with courage, strength and optimism, and you will reach the top.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't second-guess yourself. Gather facts and make decisions that address your concerns. Have confidence in your ability to handle matters, and you'll avoid interference from someone eager to step in and take over. Don't let someone outshine you.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Pay attention to the changes around you. Being well-informed will help you initiate plans that secure your position and offer peace of mind. Trust your instincts and forge ahead with confidence. Personal and physical improvements are encouraged, and love and romance are favored.

Birthday Baby: You are compassionate, insightful and attentive. You are proactive and appealing.

☿: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☿☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

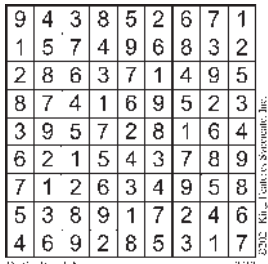
Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green



Difficulty: ★★★ 3/13 ©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer



WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

HANGING CLOTHES TO DRY Solution: 8 letters



© 2021 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 3/13 Afternoon, Apron, Balcony, Basket, Beach, Bed Sheets, Blanket, Breeze, Bugs, Chore, Detergent, Disinfect, Fade, Fastener, Flowy, Garden, Hooks, Laundry, Lint, Morning, Outfit, Overnight, Pajamas, Pegs, Pole, Porch, Portable, Robe, Seams, Shrink, Soap, Soft, Summer, Sweater, Temperature, Towels, Tree, Umbrella, Weather, Windy, Wrinkles Last Friday's Answer: Computers The NEW Wonderword Grand Millennium #1 in LARGE PRINT is now available at: www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)



# Doncic records another triple-double, Mavericks rout Bulls



**CHICAGO (AP)**—Luka Doncic had 27 points, recording another triple-double but doing so without scoring 30 for the first time in seven games, and the Dallas Mavericks rolled over the Chicago Bulls 127-92 on Monday night.

Doncic finished with 14 assists and 12 rebounds, but exited the blowout midway through the fourth quarter to end his NBA-record streak of 30-point triple-doubles at six.

Daniel Gafford made history by going 9 for 9, extending his run of consecutive made shots to 28. That's the longest since the NBA began tracking play-by-play data in 1996-97, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. He finished with 20 points.

Doncic set the tone as Dallas outscored Chicago by 28 in the first quarter. The Mavericks gave up a season low in points while handing the Bulls their most lopsided loss.

## SUNS 117, CAVALIERS 111

**CLEVELAND (AP)**—Kevin Durant scored 37 points and Devin Booker had 27 in his return from a right ankle sprain, rallying Phoenix over injury-depleted Cleveland.

Durant also had eight rebounds and six assists for the Suns, who are one game ahead of Sacramento for sixth place in the Western Conference. Booker had missed four games with his injury, but played 38 strong minutes and had seven assists and six boards.

Phoenix trailed 63-44 midway through the second quarter, but answered with a 43-15 run that ended deep in the third. Booker later put the Suns ahead for good at 106-104 by scoring in transition with seven minutes remaining.

Darius Garland scored 30 points and Caris LeVert had 17



Chicago Bulls center Andre Drummond, right, guards against Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Doncic, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game Monday, March 11, 2024, in Chicago.

points and 11 rebounds for the Cavaliers. Cleveland trailed 113-111 with 51 seconds on the clock before Jarrett Allen and Isaac Okoro committed back-to-back turnovers to end its comeback hopes.

## WARRIORS 112, SPURS 102

**SAN ANTONIO (AP)**—Jonathan Kuminga scored 21 points, Klay Thompson added 20 and Golden State overcame a sluggish start to beat San Antonio.

San Antonio rookie Victor Wembanyama had 27 points and 14 rebounds in his return from a one-game absence af-

ter spraining his right ankle in the first half of Tuesday's loss in Houston. Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said he is unsure if Wembanyama will play against Houston on Tuesday.

Devin Vassell added 17 points and Keldon Johnson had 16 points for the Spurs.

Warriors rookie Trayce Jackson-Davis added 13 points and 10 rebounds, including a one-handed dunk over Wembanyama in the final minute that dropped San Antonio's 7-foot-4 rookie to the court.

## NUGGETS 125, RAPTORS 119

**TORONTO (AP)**—Jamal

Murray scored 12 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter, and Denver rallied from 21 points down in the third quarter to beat depleted Toronto.

Murray added 12 assists to go along with Nikola Jokic's 21st triple-double of the season. Jokic finished with 35 points, 17 rebounds and 12 assists to help Denver improve to 9-1 since the All-Star break.

Jokic has 126 career triple-doubles.

The Raptors played without Scottie Barnes (left hand fracture), Chris Boucher (knee), Gary Trent Jr. (groin strain) and Immanuel Quickley (hip flexor) in addition to Jakob Poeltl

being sidelined after having surgery on his left pinkie.

Kelly Olynyk scored 24 points and Bruce Brown, who helped the Nuggets win the NBA title last season, had 13 points and 10 rebounds for Toronto.

## CELTICS 121, TRAIL BLAZERS 99

**PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)**—

Jaylen Brown scored 27 points, Jayson Tatum added 26 and Boston beat Portland despite the absence of two key starters.

Jrue Holiday and Kristaps Porzingis were sidelined with injuries for the Eastern Conference-leading Celtics, who have already clinched a playoff spot with 18 games remaining in the season.

Deandre Ayton had 22 points and 15 rebounds for the Blazers, who are second-to-last in the West.

Sam Hauser's 3-pointer with 8:40 to go in the game put Boston up 101-83, and his step-back 3 made it 115-95 and sent Portland fans streaming for the exits. Hauser finished with a season-high six 3-pointers and 22 points.

## PISTONS 114, HORNETS 97

**DETROIT (AP)**—Cade Cunningham scored 12 of his 22 points in the first quarter to help Detroit build a double-digit lead and he finished with eight assists in a win over Charlotte.

Cunningham reached 1,200 points and 400 assists in his 54th game, getting those totals in a season quicker than any player in franchise history, one game faster than Hall of Famer Isiah Thomas did during the 1984-85 season.

The Pistons have won just 11 games, but they swept the three-game season series against Charlotte.

Hornets rookie Brandon Miller scored 19 points and Miles Bridges had 24, but the Flint native and former Michigan State star missed 15 of 24 shots.

## Pistons GM Weaver has expletive-laced response to heckling fan in the stands

Detroit Pistons general manager Troy Weaver had an expletive-laced response to a heckling fan in the stands and pointed the man out to security at Little Caesars Arena.

The heated exchange, which was shared on social media, occurred during Detroit's 142-124 loss to the Dallas Mavericks on Saturday night.

"You threatened me," the unidentified man was heard saying to Weaver on the video.

Weaver declined to comment Sunday.

Jeffrey Calloway, a 46-year-old season-ticket holder from Detroit, said he was sitting near Weaver when the fan approached the team's general manager twice before being escorted away.

"The guy that was in the incident, with the Red Wings stuff on, came over and was pointing at the scoreboard earlier in the game," Calloway said in a tele-

phone interview Sunday. "Troy Weaver just shrugged his shoulders and said, 'OK,' and the guy went back to his seat.

"When (Jalen) Duren got ejected (midway through the fourth quarter), the guy came back and told him that he was terrible at his job. Then, Troy Weaver was telling the fan he had to leave and that's when ushers or security walked over."

The fan was escorted away from the seating area by security workers.

Detroit set a single-season league record with 28 straight losses earlier this season and entered Sunday tied with Washington for the league's worst record.

The Pistons gave Weaver his first opportunity to be a general manager and their record is 70-229 under him in three-plus seasons.

Detroit hosts Charlotte on Monday night. (AP)

## Lakers planning to fix few errors carved into base of Kobe's statue

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—The Los Angeles Lakers say they're planning to fix a handful of errors on the base of the statue of Kobe Bryant unveiled last month outside their arena.

The names of former NBA players Jose Calderon and Von Wafer are misspelled on the base in a rendering of the box score from Bryant's 81-point game in January 2006, along with a misspelling of the phrase "Coach's Decision." There are also minor formatting mistakes in another spot on the busy base of the statue, which displays many of Bryant's accomplishments.

"We have been aware of this for a few weeks and are already working to get it cor-

rected soon," the Lakers said in a statement.

The box score is carved into the marble base of the 19-foot bronze statue, which depicts Bryant in his postgame celebration of the second highest-scoring game in NBA history. Hundreds of fans gather daily around the statue, which sits among several statues honoring other Los Angeles sporting greats in front of the arena.

The statue is the first of three renderings of Bryant that will stand outside their downtown arena, according to his widow, Vanessa. The Lakers unveiled the first statue Feb. 8 to honor Bryant, who died along with his daughter, Gianna, and seven others in a he-



A statue in honor of former Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant is displayed after being unveiled in a ceremony outside the NBA basketball team's arena, Feb. 8, 2024, in Los Angeles.

licopter crash in January 2020.

Bryant played his entire 20-year career with the Lakers,

winning five championships. He is the fourth-leading scorer in NBA history.



# Cousins leaves Vikings for big new contract with Falcons

By DAVE CAMPBELL  
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER



Kirk Cousins is leaving Minnesota for Atlanta, landing another big contract with a well-timed foray into free agency.

Cousins agreed Monday to a four-year, \$180 million deal with \$100 million guaranteed with the Falcons, according to a person with knowledge of the terms, speaking on condition of anonymity to The Associated

Press because the deal can't be signed until Wednesday when the new league year begins.

Cousins gets a \$50 million signing bonus and his salaries for 2024 and 2025 are fully guaranteed, the person said. The annual average value of the top 10 for quarterbacks in the NFL.

Atlanta had a glaring need at quarterback after cycling through Desmond Ridder and Tyler Heinicke last season, and Cousins' wife, Julie, grew up in Alpharetta, a suburb of

Atlanta. The fit was obvious, even if that meant the 35-year-old had to leave a comfortable situation in Minnesota.

And guess what? The Falcons are scheduled to play a road game against the Vikings in the 2024 season.

"After significant and positive dialogue with Kirk and his representatives, we were unable to reach agreement on a contract that fits the short and long-term visions for both Kirk and the Minnesota Vikings," general manager Kwesi Adofo-Mensah said in a statement distributed by the team. "Kirk holds a special place in Vikings history, and we appreciate his leader-

ship and contributions to the team and the Minneapolis-

St. Paul community over the past six seasons. We wish

him, his wife, Julie, and their children all the best."

## VELORIA

From page 16

conserve energy. She first joined the event in 1998 and had since ran in the 10K, half marathon, and full marathon. As for if she will join again next year, she said, "I will try next year! I will keep practicing and stay healthy."

Results of the 5K race will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.



LEIGH GASES

Top 3 in the men's 10, third from left, first place Sildrey Veloria, second place Kosuke Sato, and third place Anthony Bergancia, pose with their prizes and Marianas Visitors Authority and Skechers representatives during the awards banquet at the Hyatt Regency Saipan last Saturday.

## SBA

From page 16

in that division to pocket all balls in one turn.

The Top Gun award was won by Cesar Sangalang.

Rookie of the Year was Domino Anthonio.

The 8-Ball on Break award went to Rengiil, Maverick Espinosa, Jerry Soriano, and Victor Formales.

In the Thursday Division, the finals MVP was Charold Hamoy, while the elimination round MVP was Buensalida.

The Budweiser Cup champion went to team Rendezvous Warriors. They are Jerry Soriano, Sangalang, Juancho Mendoza, Jesse Guerra, Cultura, Rodriguez, Rey Pnangay, and Jomer Enriquez.

Regular season first place was team True North Hobbies made up of Chester Hamoy, Villanueva, Clifford Hamoy, Harold Hamoy, Pangilinan, Christopher Manalo, Butac, Ryan Barloa, and Eric Baugh.

Second place was team Rendezvous Warriors, and third place went to Black 8 Raiders. They were Matsunaga, Rey Hermogenes, Buensalida, Cepeda, Kalen, Jack Unsa, Oliver Gragasin, and Bhoyet Sequioco.

The Top Gun Award was given to Sangalang, and Rookie of the Year was Roger Ragasa.

Buensalida, Chen, Marc Nelvis, Villanueva, and Baugh won the Run the Rack award with three each.

The 8-Ball on Break award went to Matsunaga, Rodriguez, and Sangalang.

After the awards banquet, a tourney was held, with Ches-

ter Hamoy claiming first place for \$200 and another trophy. Second was Nelvis for \$120 and a trophy, and third place went to Julian Reyes for \$80 and a trophy.

Plaques of appreciation went to Marpac, IT&E, Black 8 Pool Bar, Last Shot Bar, True North Bar & Grill, and VFW Post 3457.

SBA thanked their following tourney locations and team sponsors: MarPac, IT&E, Black 8 Pool Bar, Last Shot Bar, VFW Post 3457, True North Bar & Grill, Saipan Computer Services and Ideal Signs, and Hobbies.

They also thanked Pacific Amusement Inc. and their staff, Cecile Vivero, Mai Cenoza, Letty Ching, Donna Calma, Roxanne Trombeta, Phaibun Pomdi, Jack Unsa, Juan Limes, Raymond David, Raymond Naluz, Warlee Ellama, and Ivan Sales.

SBA and SEDA league secretary Ivan Sales said after the awards ceremony that the season went well despite some trials and tribulations. He said some bars closed down and they had to do some reshuffling for the venues of the teams.

Despite that, he said, "It went well. Everyone was excited to play billiards. There were 18 teams last season."

"The Open 8-Ball League is designed to help those who are stressed at work and want to relax after. Just unwind, drink, have fun with your friends, and build more friendships and camaraderie," said Sales.

The SBA league is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at participating bars, with the first game at 8pm.

are at 2-2 each; Savemore has a 1-2 record; Yuman is at 1-3; and Live 2 Live is in the trenches with three losses.

**KagBros 103** – Guerrero 20, Lifoifo 20, Deleon Guerrero 13, Santos 11, R. Babauta 9, Z. Babauta 7, Ogomoro 6, Sambile 6, Limes 6, Nekaifes 3, Camacho 2.

**Stag 49** – Wesley 9, Larioza 8, De Guzman 6, Marchadesch 5, Lumen 5, Polido 5, Caruana 5, Casaba 2, Bravo 2, Maluto 2.

**Scoring by halves:** 55-22, 103-49.

## KAGBROS

From page 16

behind KagBros and TanHoldings are Elite Force and Longshot with 2-1 each; Tax Pro/Triple L are in the middle of the back with an even 2-2; Stag is at 1-2; Lamesa Kusina has won one out of four games; and Napa Auto Parts have yet to win with three losses.

In Bracket A, Choju is still undefeated with four wins; Best Deal and Bourbon Bar & Cafe are at 2-1 each; Unity Trade and Premier Builders

# 2024 TJ BUBBLE COLOR 5K RUN SAIPAN

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Doncic records another triple-double, Mavericks rout Bulls.

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# Saipan Tribune Sports



Cousins leaves Vikings for big new contract with Falcons.

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16 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Veloria, Miller first in 10K of Saipan Marathon

By LEIGH GASES  
leigh\_gases@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

**N**MI runners nearly swept the Top 3 in both the men and women's division of the 10K/6.2 miles in the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 last Saturday, with Sildrey Veloria and Akiko Miller first to finish the course from the starting line at the Hyatt Regency Saipan parking lot to just before Tanapag and back last Saturday.

With a 6am start time, 145 10K runners ran alongside the full course and half marathon runners, with Veloria coming in first overall at 39:03.

Second place went to Kosuke Sato at 41:19, and third place was student-athlete Anthony Bergancia with a time of 42:20.

In the women's division, Miller was the fastest on the course with a time of 43:33. Second went to student multi-

sport athlete Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez at 1:13:32, and third place was Japan's Deguchi Maki at 1:18:33.

In the men's age division rankings, Agape Christian School's Reyviel Escarlan was first in the 12U at 1:25:25; Rex Pixley was first in the 18U at 1:13:05; Jaeyun Ahn topped the men's open at 1:12:59; Hyocheol Yu finished first in the 35-39 with a time of 1:17:03; the 40-44 was won by



LEIGH GASES

Top 3 in the women's 10K, third from left, first place Akiko Miller; second place Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez's mom, Magie; and third place Deguchi Maki pose with their prizes and Marianas Visitors Authority and Skechers representatives during the awards banquet at the Hyatt Regency Saipan last Saturday.

Inkook Ko at 1:15:49; Shinobu Chida came in first in the 45-49 at 1:21:41; Daniel Dilse was first in the 50-54 at 1:22:28; James Munnis topped the 55-59 at 1:13:02; and the 60+ was won by Paul Khang at 1:27:09.

In the women's age division rankings, ACS' Phoebe Muiyang Wang was first in the 14U with a time of 1:42:37; Aubrey Castro claimed first in the 18U with 1:30:02; Kelsey McClellan was first in the women's open at 1:20:15; Heather Brook topped

the 35-39 at 1:18:56; Jennifer Tan Su was first in the 40-44 at 1:43:10; Mi Seon Lee clocked in first in the 45-49 at 1:26:28; Krista Hawley finished first in the 50-54 at 1:24:30; Lydia Tan claimed first in the 55-59 at 1:24:48; and Lynnette Tenorio was first in the 60+ at 1:48:31.

Veloria, whose first-place finish always seemed to elude him, finally claimed first place this time around. He said of his win, "It felt great, almost surreal, to come in

first." During the race, he said he led the entire time.

As for the course, he said, "It was an incredible course. Perfect racing conditions prevailed. I had a wonderful experience during the race."

He added, "Not knowing who would be competing with me going into this race, I noticed a lot of fresh faces in the audience. I will most probably do it again next year, assuming everything goes as planned."

For Miller, she said the

weather was nice and although she was worried about it being windy, it didn't turn out to be a windy day. She said the new course was perfectly organized, along with the aid stations. "Volunteer staff kept me motivated and the runners supported each other. I was very impressed with that," she said.

She said she was behind the men's fourth or fifth place runner for most of the course and was able to

See VELORIA on Page 15

## SBA hosts awards banquet

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER



The Saipan Billiards Association hosted its awards banquet for their 2023 SBA Open 8-Ball League Tourney last Sunday at the West Coast Restaurant.

Tuesday Division's finals MVP went to Chester Hamoy, while in the elimination round, the MVP was Jerry Soriano.

The Budweiser Cup champion was team Black 8 Ideal Signs Rustlers. They were made up of Rowel Mariano, Jerry Tiu, Ken Chen, Robert Sanciangco, Chester Ham-

oy, Charold Hamoy, Albert Pangilinan, Mei Rengiil, and Marc Butac.

First place in the regular season was team Black 8 Ideal Signs Rustlers; second was Rendezvous IT&E Destroyer—Nolan Cultura, Rolly Villanueva, Rey Pinangay, Jeff Garcia, Roman Rodriguez, Rogel Caruana, and R.J. Mascarinas. Third place went to Black 8 Slayers' Ray Matsunaga, Rey Hermogenes, Arlon Buensalida, Patrick Cepeda, Fel Kalen, Maverick Espinosa, Oliver Gragas, and Sequioco.

Chester Hamoy claimed the Run the Rack award with five. He was the only player

See SBA on Page 15



LEIGH GASES

Tuesday Division's Budweiser Cup champions Black 8 Ideal Signs Rustlers poses with their trophies during the 2023 SBA Open 8-Ball League Tourney awards banquet last Sunday at the West Coast Restaurant.

## KagBros pummel Stag, 103-49

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

KagBros pummeled Stag in a blowout, 103-49, in the Legends Sports Association Invitational Basketball League Season 2 last Saturday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

With their win, KagBros are now tied with TanHoldings at the top of the standings of Bracket B with a 3-1 record each.

KagBros' Fred Guerrero opened up the game with three back-to-back threes, but the first half of the game was a seesaw battle, with both teams exchanging blows. It quickly became clear though that the KagBros had the slight advantage.

Toward the end of the first half, Stag remained stagnant at 17 points. KagBros bullied them into submission and went post to post multiple times, ballooning their lead by more than half. By the time Stag could retaliate,

half, but it was just too little too late. Turnovers and aggressive drives by KagBros would continue their dominating performance over Stag.

From Stag's fighting chance in the first few minutes of the game, to dwindling hope towards the end of the first half, KagBros led by a huge 33-point deficit.

Stag tried to rearrange and make some adjustments at the start of the second



J.J. Lifofoi's 20 points as well. Damien Deleon Guerrero as-



LEIGH GASES

The KagBros team takes a group photo after their win against Stag in the Legends Sports Association Invitational Basketball League Season 2 last Saturday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

sisted with their cause by putting up 13 markers.

As the clock ticked down, it became clear that the KagBros would win by a huge blowout. Undeclared post-to-post drives inched them closer to a 50-point lead, just as Stag became rooted on the court with less than 50 points on the board.

KagBros went on to play with vigor while Stag pushed on despite fatigue. Stag's Tim Wesley didn't break the double-digit mark but put up the most for his team with 9. Jerry Larioza contributed 8, and Christian De Guzman put up 6.

In the first game that night, Yuman beat Live 2 Live, 99-78. Last Sunday, Longshot won over Lamesa Kusina, 83-68, and Tax Pro/Triple L defeated Napa Auto Parts by 2 points, 88-86, and in the last game, Premier Builders powered past Best Deal, 95-74. Last Thursday, Choju remained unbeaten after they slipped past Save-more, 67-64.

In the Bracket B standings See KAGBROS on Page 15